



# NEWS

R E L E A S E

Illinois Department of Public Health

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 18, 2009

**CONTACT:**

Melaney Arnold 217-558-0500

Kelly Jakubek 312-814-8198

[www.idph.state.il.us](http://www.idph.state.il.us)

## **State's Top Doc Gives Rockford RiverHawks Pitcher Matt Enderle Seasonal Flu Shot**

*All Illinoisans share the responsibility of reducing illness due to flu*

**ROCKFORD** – In his tour of communities throughout the state, Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Damon T. Arnold, along with Winnebago County Health Department Administrator J. Maichle Bacon and local officials, visited Rock Valley College in Rockford to encourage Illinoisans to get a seasonal flu shot. At the event, Dr. Arnold gave Matt Enderle, pitcher for the Rockford RiverHawks Baseball team, and 12 local health department administrators, a seasonal flu shot and also urged people to follow the 3 C's – Clean, Cover, Contain. This fall's flu season is expected to be worse than usual flu seasons because the new H1N1 flu strain will be circulating at the same time as the seasonal flu. The single best way for a person to protect themselves and their loved ones against the flu is to get vaccinated.

“With the possibility of increased flu activity due to the addition of the new H1N1 virus, it is more important this flu season than ever to get a seasonal flu shot. The best way to protect yourself and your family against the flu is to get a flu shot,” Dr. Arnold said. “It is also extremely important for everyone to make sure they practice good health hygiene and cough etiquette by following the 3 Cs - Clean – wash your hands frequently and properly to prevent the spread of germs; Cover – your cough and sneeze with a tissue or sleeve – not your hand; and Contain – contain your germs by staying home when you are sick.”

During his statewide tour, Dr. Arnold will make stops next week in Springfield, Carbondale, Metro East, Quincy, Peoria and Champaign to continue to encourage Illinoisans to get a seasonal flu shot.

“The RiverHawks are honored to be included in this statewide flu campaign,” said Matt Enderle, pitcher for the Rockford RiverHawks. “With the flu season upon us we think it is important to be a community leader in an effort to staying healthy.”

-more-

Each year an estimated five to 20 percent of the U.S. population gets the flu. Approximately 200,000 people are hospitalized with complications from the flu and about 36,000 die annually. Flu symptoms include a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or above, headache, body aches, exhaustion, chills and weakness.

“We will see more illness from the new H1N1 flu this fall than what occurred this past spring and summer,” said Mike Bacon, Winnebago County Health Department’s public health administrator. “The flu is typically transmitted more easily in fall and winter. And, with the uncertain impact of the new H1N1 co-circulating with season flu strains, we must be prepared for perhaps an early and prolonged influenza season.”

The flu is spread through coughing or sneezing. People can also get the flu by touching objects carrying the virus, such as telephones and door knobs, and then touching their mouth or nose.

Young children, people with chronic medical conditions and elderly people are at higher risk of complications from seasonal flu and it is critical they get a seasonal flu shot. However, with the new H1N1 flu circulating simultaneously, Dr. Arnold is encouraging all Illinoisans, except those with contraindications, to get a seasonal flu shot this year. The more people who receive a seasonal flu vaccine, the better chance there is to reduce the number of people who become ill and overwhelm our health care systems.

A person does not contract the flu from getting a flu shot. Some people may experience a mild fever, body aches, and fatigue for a few days after being vaccinated, and soreness at the injection site, however this is not because the person has contracted the flu from the shot.

The seasonal flu shot does not protect against the new H1N1 flu. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is working to develop a vaccine for the new H1N1 flu, which is separate from the seasonal flu vaccine. Initial shipments of the new H1N1 vaccine are expected to be available in mid-October. The seasonal flu vaccine is one shot for most people. The CDC is currently analyzing data from clinical trials to determine whether one shot or two will be required for the new H1N1 vaccine. The new H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine – it is intended to be used in addition to seasonal flu vaccine.

For more information log onto [www.ready.illinois.gov](http://www.ready.illinois.gov) and [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).

###