



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Denise Sjodin
Crow Wing County Community
Services
(218) 824-1075

It's time to get ready for flu season

Flu season is here. Are you ready? Flu season peaks between December and February, but it begins spreading earlier. It's not too early to be vaccinated.

Vaccinations are available as part of a complete, preventive healthcare visit through the Child and Teen Checkups program for Crow Wing County residents age 20 and younger who are enrolled in Medical Assistance.

"The Minnesota Department of Health recommends everyone six months old and older get an annual flu vaccination to help protect themselves and others. And if your child is between six months through eight years, he or she may need two doses, four weeks apart, so check with your healthcare provider," said Denise Sjodin, Crow Wing County public health nurse and Child and Teen Checkups advocate.

Flu symptoms are uncomfortable and come on quickly—headache, sore throat, fever, cough, and body aches. By the time the symptoms can be felt, a person has already become contagious and able to infect others. The flu can also be more dangerous for infants or toddlers, the elderly, or those with lung issues.

"Good hygiene is also important to help stop the spread of flu germs. Teach your children how to wash their hands well and how to cough or sneeze into their elbow, rather than their hands," Sjodin said.

While you are getting your child vaccinated for the flu, consider having your healthcare provider review their immunization records to make sure your child is current on their vaccinations. Up-to-date vaccinations are needed to enroll your children in childcare, early childhood programs, schools, and colleges. From birth to the teenage years, several vaccinations are needed to protect your child from diseases and when vaccinations are current, it helps others stay healthier, too.

To schedule a flu vaccination and wellness visit for a child, teen or young adult on MA, contact a participating provider and ask for a Child and Teen Checkups visit. Adults and those not eligible for a Child and Teen Checkup should contact their medical provider or pharmacy about being vaccinated.

Our Vision: Being Minnesota's favorite place.

Our Mission: Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

Our Values: Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.

Child and Teen Checkups – Health screenings for kids

Local healthcare providers offer Child and Teen Checkups to Crow Wing County residents through age 20 on Medical Assistance.

The program provides medical, dental, and vision exams from participating providers in Crow Wing County. More information, including a current list of local Child and Teen Checkups providers, can be found at www.ChildAndTeenCheckups.com or by calling 1-877-724-1080. Appointments can be scheduled by contacting participating providers and asking for a Child and Teen Checkup.

The Child and Teen Checkups program is federally required by the Social Security Act and is administered by the Minnesota Department of Human Services and Crow Wing County.

Community Services expends more than \$163 million dollars annually, of which 4.66%, \$7.6 million is funded by the county levy. In 2015, total program costs were \$163,133,479 with Medical Assistance programs being the highest spending area at \$110 million, or 67.5% of the total program costs. Social Service programs represent the second largest portion of the total at \$41.4 million, or 25.4%. Cash assistance programs were 6.3% of the total at \$10.2 million. While this is a large portion of the county budget we have seen a significant decrease. For example, from 2009 to our proposed 2017 budget, we have reduced tax levy dollars by \$1,209,306, a decrease of 14.3%.

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