Eastern Idaho Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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NEWS RELEASE

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Eastern Idaho Public Health Urges Caution while Traveling for the Holidays as Report of First Flu Death of the Season Arrives

Eastern Idaho – Eastern Idaho Public Health (EIPH) has confirmed its first influenza-related death for the 2026-2027 flu season. The individual was over the age of 65. To protect the privacy of the individual and their family, no further personal details will be released.

This report follows a recent announcement from neighboring Southeastern Idaho Public Health regarding the first flu-related death in its eight-county region, signaling that **influenza is actively circulating across Eastern Idaho,** just ahead of the holiday travel season.

"We extend our deepest condolences to the family and loved ones of this individual," says Brenna Christofferson, Public Information Officer at EIPH. "With Thanksgiving and winter holidays quickly approaching, this loss is a serious reminder of how serious influenza can be. We want to remind everyone that **flu immunization is the best protection** against the virus, especially before travel and large gatherings."

Who Is Most at Risk?

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness. Symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, and sometimes a cough and sore throat. People who are especially vulnerable to complications of the flu include:

- Pregnant women
- People 50 years of age and older
- Individuals with chronic medical conditions
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu

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What To Do:

In addition to being vaccinated, people can protect themselves from the influenza virus and other respiratory illnesses by practicing everyday healthy habits:

- **Wash your hands** frequently with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, especially after using the restroom and before touching or eating food.
- **Cover** your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing to prevent the spread.
- **Stay home** from work/school/childcare when sick.

Why Get Vaccinated? Annual flu vaccination is the most effective way to protect yourself and your loved ones against serious illness, hospitalization, and complications from the influenza virus. Everyone six months of age and older is recommended to receive an annual flu vaccine.

For more information, call our office at (208) 533-3235.

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