



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Increased Flu Activity Prompts Public Health Officials to Encourage Individuals to Take Action to Prevent Spreading the Flu

Widespread influenza (commonly known as the flu) activity is being reported across the nation and positive cases of influenza are being seen here in Eastern Idaho. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone ages six months and older receive a flu vaccination every year. It is especially important that people at high risk for complications from the flu and anyone in close contact to those people are vaccinated as soon as possible. People at higher risk include infants, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes, or heart disease, and people 65 and older.

Flu vaccine is available at Eastern Idaho Public Health District (EIPHD) and Southeastern Idaho Public Health (SIPH) offices. The flu vaccine protects against three different strains of the flu that public health monitoring has indicated are likely to be circulating. However, no vaccine is one hundred percent effective and the level of immunity against the flu can vary from person to person, depending on health and age factors of the person being vaccinated. Furthermore, even if you have been vaccinated or had the flu, you are still vulnerable to other strains of the virus that are not included in this year's vaccine.

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It is spread mainly through droplets when people infected with the virus cough and sneeze or by touching a surface or object that has the flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes, or possibly their nose. Influenza can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The flu is different from a cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly.

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People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills (however, not everyone with the flu will have a fever)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

If you are experiencing flu-like symptoms, contact your health care provider, especially if you have a high risk condition. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing and possible treatment are needed. Your doctor may prescribe antiviral drugs that can treat the flu. These drugs work better for treatment the sooner they are started. The emergency room should be used for people who are very sick. You should not go to the emergency room if you are only mildly ill. If you have the emergency warning signs of flu sickness, you should go to the emergency room.

What are the emergency warning signs of flu?

In children

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash
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In addition to the signs above, get medical help right away for any infant who has any of these signs:

- Being unable to eat
- Has trouble breathing
- Has no tears when crying
- Significantly fewer wet diapers than normal

In adults

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough

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In addition to getting vaccinated against the flu, people are urged to:

- Cover their mouths and noses with a tissue when coughing or sneezing to prevent infecting other people.
- Wash their hands frequently, especially after being out in the public. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching their eyes, noses and mouths. Germs spread this way.
- Avoid people who appear sick.
- If a person is sick with flu-like illness, he should stay home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications (Tylenol, ibuprophen, etc.) in order to prevent spreading the illness to others--except to get medical care.
- Get plenty of rest, drink plenty of liquids, eat nutritious foods and take part in physical activity to stay healthy.

Again, influenza vaccination is available at Eastern Idaho Public Health District and Southeastern Idaho Public Health offices. In Idaho Falls, no appointment is needed for a flu shot. People can simply walk-in between the hours of 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. If they have insurance, Medicaid, or Medicare, they should bring their card with them.

For other health Eastern Idaho Public Health District office locations, please visit EIPHD's website at www.phd7.idaho.gov or call:

Idaho Falls	533-3235
Challis	879-2504
Driggs	354-2220
Dubois	374-5216
Mud Lake	663-4860
Rexburg	356-3239
Rigby	745-7297
Salmon	756-2123
St. Anthony	624-7585

For Southeastern Idaho Public Health's office locations, visit SIPH's website at www.sdhdidaho.org.

For information about influenza and how to stay healthy, please visit www.cdc.gov/flu.

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