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DOH-BAY PROVIDES FLU CARE ADVICE



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PANAMA CITY, Fla.— Flu activity in Bay County continues to increase. DOH-Bay wants you to be prepared should you or a loved one become sick. Symptoms of the flu include; fever (in some cases), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, and sometime diarrhea and vomiting.

If you become ill with flu-like symptoms, contact your health care provider as soon as possible. Your health care provider can prescribe antiviral treatment if appropriate. Treatment is most effective when started within 48 hours, so calling as soon as you become ill is important, especially if you or your loved one is at a higher risk for complications: children younger than 5, adults over the age of 65, pregnant women, and those with underlying medical conditions.

Flu complications can result in hospitalization and sometimes death. Pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections and ear infections are examples of flu-related complications. If you are diagnosed with the flu, you should stay at home and rest. You should also drink plenty of water and other clear liquids to prevent fluid loss, dehydration.

Stay home from work and keep children home from school or daycare when sick to help prevent spreading the flu to others. You should be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication. It is also essential to practice good hygiene by [properly and frequently washing your hands](#). Make it a habit to clean and disinfect commonly used surfaces in your home, school or office. You can take additional steps to ward off the flu by coughing or sneezing into a tissue or your elbow and avoiding touching your face.

There are emergency warning signs of flu sickness that do need immediate medical attention. For children this includes; 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 and/or fever with a rash. For infants get medical help right away for any of these signs; being unable to eat, having trouble breathing, having no tears when crying, and/or significantly fewer wet diapers than normal. Adults should seek immediate medical treatment with the following warning signs; difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, and/or flu-like symptoms that improve but return with fever and worse cough.

There are still weeks of flu activity to come. It is not too late to get your flu vaccine. The flu vaccine is safe, and recommended for everyone six months and older, including pregnant women.

We still have some supply of flu shots for children available. Hours are Monday through Friday 8 am to 5 pm. Please check in by 4 pm. There is no fee for these shots through the child vaccine program. DOH-Bay also has the high-dose adult shot as well. There is a fee for this service, but it is also covered by Medicare and Blue Cross Blue Shield. No appointment is necessary for either service.

Flu vaccines can vary in effectiveness from season to season, but they continue to be the best way to prevent influenza infection and serious influenza complications. To locate a flu shot near you, contact your health care provider or use DOH's flu shot locator:

www.flhealth.gov/findaflushot

Visit FluFreeFlorida.com for more information on how you can be a part of #FluFreeFlorida. Visit www.floridahealth.gov/floridaflu for more information on influenza and influenza-like illness in Florida.

About the Florida Department of Health

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