

Panhandle

Public Health District

For more information, contact: Jessica Davies, 308-760-6492 or jdavies@pphd.ne.gov

February 13, 2025

For Immediate Release:

Influenza A cases are on the rise in the Panhandle

Flu can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Flu symptoms usually come on suddenly. People who have flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms:

- fever or feeling feverish/chills (not everyone with 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.

“PPHD’s school, hospital, and wastewater surveillance is showing high rates of Influenza A around the area,” said Jessica Davies, Panhandle Public Health District Director.

Davies added, “If you test positive for Influenza A, it is important to remain at home until you have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, and your symptoms have been improving for 24 hours.”

Most people who get flu will recover in a few days to less than two weeks, but some people will develop complications (such as pneumonia) as a result of flu, some of which can be life-threatening and result in death.

Antiviral drugs like oseltamivir (Tamiflu) should be used as early as possible in people who have flu-like illness. For those who aren’t sick, preventive measures along with flu vaccines can help prevent flu and other winter illnesses.

In Nebraska, there have been a total of 34 flu-related deaths so far this season. Influenza A is the most prevalent strain of flu this season, with a total of 10,658 cases reported statewide so far.

Protect yourself from the flu by:

- Flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older
- Washing your hands often
- Avoiding contact with people who are sick

- Staying home when you're sick
- Covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing
- Practice health habits such as rest, drinking fluids, and staying physically active

Getting the flu vaccine can help lower the risk of flu-related illnesses, doctor visits, missed work and school, as well as hospitalizations and deaths associated with the flu.

While flu can make anyone sick, certain people are at greater risk for serious complications:

- Young children
- Adults 65 years of age or older
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic lung disease (like asthma and COPD), diabetes (type 1 and 2), heart disease, neurologic conditions, and certain other long-term health conditions
- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities

Call your local vaccine provider or PPHD at 308-633-2866 to ask about getting your flu vaccine today. No insurance? Ask about the Vaccine for Children's (VFC) and Vaccine for Adult's (VFA) program.

A weekly update of influenza and other respiratory diseases in Nebraska can be accessed at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Seasonal-Respiratory-Diseases.aspx>.

Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety, and quality of life for all who live, learn, work, and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community. Visit our website www.pphd.ne.gov.