

IT IS OFFICIAL: Influenza season has arrived!

By Cindy Braley, Clinic Manager & Terali Stonehocker, CEO

The community has had its first confirmed case of influenza and several patients have been seen with Influenza Like Illness (ILI) in both the clinics and the ER.

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness and at times lead to death. The flu differs from a cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly. Symptoms of Flu vary from person to person. Some symptoms of the flu can include:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- 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 have the emergency warning signs of flu sickness, you should go to the emergency room:

In Children

- Fast or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids (No tears when crying, significantly fewer wet diapers)

- Not waking up or interacting
- Being so irritable that child doesn't want to be held
- Flu like symptoms improve and then return with fever and worse cough

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 and then return with fever and worse cough

“Antiviral drugs” can be used to treat influenza illness and lessen the time you are sick. Antiviral medications are different from antibiotics, which fight against bacterial infections. Antiviral medications can lessen symptoms and shorten the time you are sick by 1 or 2 days.

Vaccination is the best protection against the flu. It is not too late to get the Flu vaccination. Anyone 6 months or older, who have not been vaccinated yet this season should get vaccinated. People seeking vaccination should call their health care provider and clinic.

Prior Hospital Happenings available at <http://www.fcphd.org/news.html>

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