

*It's
because
we care!*

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Reports of Influenza in Emmons County Rising

February 19, 2020 – LINTON, ND – Influenza season has yet to reach its seasonal peak and recently more cases have been reported in the region. To date, 25 cases of influenza have been reported in Emmons County, with 23 cases classified as Influenza B, according to www.ndflu.com.

Influenza, a contagious respiratory illness, is caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat and lungs. Influenza can cause mild to severe illness, and at times, can lead to death. According to the CDC, influenza virus types A and B cause most human illness and the influenza season. However, Influenza A viruses are the only influenza viruses known to cause flu pandemics, i.e., global epidemics of flu disease.

While the North Dakota Department of Health estimates that an average of 2,800 North Dakotans have lab-identified influenza each year, the number of actual cases is likely much higher. Influenza is primarily spread by droplets made when someone with influenza coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets then land in the mouths or noses of someone nearby, or transmitted from an infected surface to someone's hands, which then contact the mouth, eyes or nose.

Symptoms of influenza usually appear 1-4 days after being exposed. Traditionally these symptoms will appear on average after two days, and may linger for up to a week:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Chills
- Headache
- Body Aches
- Malaise (Generally Feeling Unwell)

Children, pregnant women and older individuals, may be at an increased risk of developing potentially severe complications from influenza, such as pneumonia or death. Similarly, individuals with chronic medical conditions (diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, severe anemia, AIDS, HIV, or other chronic diseases that weaken immune systems) are also at risk for severe complications.

Health officials agree the single best way to prevent influenza is to get a flu vaccination each flu season, if you are older than 6 months old. It is not yet too late to get a vaccination for this flu season. As long as influenza is circulating, a vaccination is recommended.

Other steps you can take to lessen your likelihood of influenza are to wash your hands frequently, avoid touching your face, avoid close contact with those who have not been vaccinated or are ill, cover your coughs and/or sneezes, throw used tissues in the trash, clean commonly touched surfaces, and stay home when you are sick.

If you do get sick with influenza, antiviral drugs can lessen symptoms and shorten the time you are sick by 1 or 2 days, and may prevent serious complications like pneumonia. There are four FDA-approved antiviral drugs recommended by the CDC to treat influenza this season: oseltamivir phosphate (available as a generic version or under the trade name Tamiflu), zanamivir (trade name Relenza), peramivir (trade name Rapivab) and baloxavir marboxil (trade name Xofluza).

For more information about influenza visit www.cdc.gov/flu and www.ndflu.com

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