

NEWS RELEASE

Panhandle

Public Health District

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For immediate release

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Influenza Illness in the Panhandle

The Panhandle has seen increase in respiratory illness and patients seeking medical care for upper respiratory symptoms: fever, cough and/or sore throat, body aches, fatigue. If you become ill with these influenza-like-symptoms, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people. To take care of yourself at home, get plenty of sleep, drink plenty of fluids, and take fever reducing medications. Most people are able to recover at home.

If you have underlying health problems, consult with your medical provider. Anyone experiencing these “emergency warning signs” should seek urgent medical care: trouble breathing, not drinking enough fluids, pain or pressure in the chest, sudden dizziness, confusion, persistent vomiting, a child not waking up or not interacting, or bluish skin color. If you are sick, please do not visit the hospital other than to receive medical treatment or testing. If you have a sore throat, cough, fever, or nasal congestion, please do not visit.

The single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated each year, but good health habits like covering your cough and washing your hands often can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu.

Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs

- 1. Avoid close contact.*
Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- 2. Stay home when you are sick.*
Stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. Keep sick children at home. You will help prevent others from catching the illness.
- 3. Cover your mouth and nose.*
Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- 4. Wash your hands often.*
Washing your hands and the hands of your children often will help protect you from germs.

5. *Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.*

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

6. *Practice other good health habits.*

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

When to seek medical attention for yourself or a family member.

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- 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

To learn more about the flu, visit the CDC's website: flu.gov, PPHD's website www.pphd.org, or contact Melody Leisy at mleisy@pphd.org or 308-262-2217.

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.