

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 12/15/2017

TO: Grant County healthcare providers, infection control staff, supervisory nursing staff, clinic management, school nurses.

Grant County Emergency Management

Grant County Media

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

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Influenza Season Arrives in Grant County.
GCHD has received reports of positive rapid tests for
influenza A and influenza B

The Grant County Health Officer, Dr. Alexander Brzezny, has issued the following alert to the Grant County healthcare community and media: **the influenza season has arrived in Grant County.** Be aware of increasing influenza and influenza like illness, (ILI) in Grant County and Washington State. **All healthcare facilities should enforce their policies regarding healthcare worker's influenza vaccinations and masking.**

GCHD has been receiving an increased number of reports of influenza A cases and influenza B cases. Washington state has had five lab-confirmed influenza death that have been reported thus far in the 2017-2018 season. No confirmed deaths have occurred in Grant County.

GCHD urges all residents **6 months and older to get their flu shot as soon as possible.** Flu activity typically increases in the winter months when people spend more time indoors around each other. People who haven't been vaccinated against the flu still have time to get the vaccine before the season reaches its peak.

Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu shot this season.

- Only injectable flu vaccines (flu shot) are recommended this season.
- Flu shots do work. CDC found that flu shots reduced a child's risk of ending up at the doctor's office sick with flu by more than 60% last season.

Children 6 months through 8 years of age need either 1 or 2 doses of vaccine.

- Children 6 months through 8 years getting vaccinated for the first time, or who have only previously received 1 dose of vaccine in the past, should get 2 doses this season.
 - The first dose should be given as soon as vaccine is available to "prime" the immune system.
 - The second dose should be given at least 28 days later to build more and longer lasting immune protection.
 - Children who only get 1 dose, but need 2 doses, are likely to have less or possibly no protection from that single dose.

Prevent the spread of influenza



People with the flu can make others sick one day before symptoms appear and up to five days after symptoms begin. Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing and throw it away. It is very important to wash your hands often. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers work well when soap and warm water are not available.

If you or a family member are sick with a flu-like sickness, stay home from school or work for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine), unless you need to leave to receive medical care. If your doctor prescribes antiviral medicine, finish the entire prescription.

Are you at increased risk?

Flu can make existing health conditions worse and can lead to hospitalization and death.

- People with asthma, diabetes, chronic lung disease, heart disease, and people over 65 years old are among those who are at a higher risk for developing flu-related complications.
- Infants are at an increased risk for flu, caregivers who are sick should wear a mask when caring for an infant.
- Pregnant women are at serious risk of flu complications. The flu shot is safe and recommended at any stage of pregnancy. When expectant moms get a flu shot it protects the baby inside too — for up to six months after birth. Get a flu shot to protect you and your growing family.

There are flu vaccines available in various locations, including health care provider offices and pharmacies. People can also find a clinic by calling the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 or GCHD at 509-766-7960.

Influenza resources for LTCFs

[Recommendations for Prevention & Control of Influenza Outbreaks in Long Term Care Facilities](#) | WA-DOH

[CDC interim guidance for influenza outbreak management in LTCFs](#) | CDC

Consultation

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