

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 1/23/2023

TO: Grant Co. Media

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GRANT COUNTY, WA – The Grant County Health District (GCHD) has investigated three confirmed and one probable flu-associated deaths during the 2022-2023 flu season thus far. The confirmed deaths occurred in a female in her 80's, a female in her 60's, and a male in his 60's. “These deaths are a painful reminder of the high influenza activity seen in our country and also in our area, especially at the end of the year. We offer our sincere condolences to the families and friends who lost their loved ones,” said Dr. Brzezny, Grant County Health Officer. “As the flu season continues in the United States, it is still appropriate to continue vaccinating against this virus to reduce the chance of severe complications,” he added.

Grant County Flu Patterns – Surveillance of positive flu cases maintained an early and steady incline this season, eventually reaching a peak in late December. Positive flu cases have reached a plateau in Grant County. Influenza A remains the dominant strain thus far. It is not uncommon for a different strain, such as influenza B, to pick up the pace at this point in flu season. The flu vaccine protects well against both strains of flu.

Washington: Flu-associated Deaths - Washington is reporting 168 laboratory-confirmed flu-associated deaths to date. Most deaths have occurred in people with underlying health conditions, or in people with no pre-existing conditions but who were elderly. Four deaths have occurred in children.

Table 5: Count of Reported Laboratory-Confirmed Influenza-Associated Deaths, Past Seasons to Week 2 and Total

Season	Count of Deaths as of Week 2 of Season	Count of Deaths Reported for the Entire Season (week 40 to week 39)
2022-2023, to date	168	168
2021-2022	2	26
2020-2021	0	0
2019-2020	36	114
2018-2019	16	245
2017-2018	86	296
2016-2017	110	278
2015-2016	8	67
2014-2015	87	156

Community Action - The best tool we have in our fight against flu, is prevention. An individual can significantly reduce their risk and severity of flu by getting the flu vaccine. **It is not too late to get your flu shot.** GCHD urges all residents **6 months and older to get their flu shot as soon as possible.**

Flu Treatment – Antivirals are prescription medicines that fight the flu virus. Antivirals are different than antibiotics and must be prescribed to you by a healthcare provider. It is very important that flu antiviral drugs are started as soon as possible to treat patients who are:

- Hospitalized with flu
- Very sick with the flu, but are not hospitalized
- People who are at higher risk of serious flu complications based on their age or health.

Individuals who are at a high risk for the flu should begin antiviral treatment immediately, even if symptoms are mild.

Summary – Flu season is still upon us, with the potential for another spike in positive cases. Grant County Health District strongly encourages our community to get the flu vaccine if they are eligible and have not done so already. The flu vaccine protects well against the most common strains of flu and can significantly reduce illness and hospitalization. Visit www.vaccines.gov to find flu vaccines near you.