

January 11, 2018

Health Officials advise public to practice prevention as flu and flu-like illness increase in Mobile County and Statewide

As local physicians' offices and hospitals experience an influx of individuals reporting influenza-like symptoms, health officials urge the public to take steps to minimize their exposure to ill persons and practice good prevention measures.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this flu season has had an increase in influenza A-H3N2 activity. County health officials have received reports of all strains of influenza (Flu A, Flu B and Flu AB) circulating in Mobile County. Currently, influenza and influenza-like illness is widespread throughout the state. The numbers of cases of flu and flu-like illness reported this year are nearly double the number reported at this same time last flu season.

If you are experiencing the symptoms below, please contact your healthcare provider.

What you need to know about the flu:

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Symptoms can range from mild to severe and can, at times, lead to hospitalization or death. Certain groups are at higher risk for serious flu complications (e.g. older people, young children, people with certain healthcare conditions). The time from when a person is exposed to flu virus and infected to when symptoms begin can be from 1 to 4 days with an average of 2 days.

Signs and symptoms of flu usually come on suddenly and can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Tiredness
- Some people have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in young children than adults

-more-

Protecting yourself, your family and friends from the flu:

- Get the flu vaccination if you are 6 months old or older
- Stay away from people who are sick
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Wash hands with soap and water frequently
- Stay home from work or school if you are sick
- Avoid crowds

If you get the flu:

- Take Antiviral Drugs, if prescribed by a doctor
- Take everyday precautions to protect others while sick:
 - Limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like the flu.
 - Stay home until you are better