



Panhandle Health District

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Panhandle Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Panhandle Health District Reports First Flu Death of the Season

HAYDEN, ID – Panhandle Health District (PHD) is reporting the state's first influenza-related death for the 2015-2016 flu season. An adult woman from northern Idaho died due to complications from an influenza infection.

"This tragedy emphasizes that the flu is a serious illness, and now is the time to get vaccinated if you haven't already," said Dave Hylsky, PHD Staff Epidemiologist. "The flu infects 5-20% of Americans, causing over 200,000 hospitalizations and about 30,000 deaths each year."

There were 32 flu-related deaths in Idaho during last year's flu season. Eight of those occurred in Idaho's five northern counties. Infants, pregnant women, people with chronic medical conditions and the elderly are especially at-risk for complications associated with the flu.

Flu activity typically peaks between December and February, but can continue to spread as late as May. Vaccination is recommended for everyone age 6 months and older. It is the best way to keep yourself healthy and stop the flu virus from spreading to others. PHD also recommends protecting yourself by taking the following measures:

- Wash hands with soap frequently and use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, especially after you cough, sneeze or touch your face.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and dispose of the tissue immediately. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your inner elbow. Droplets from a sneeze can travel up to six feet.
- Stay home when sick and do not return to work until 24 hours after a fever is gone.

Flu activity is expected to increase in the coming weeks and months. Symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, a cough, sore throat or other respiratory issues. If you are

exhibiting any of these symptoms, you are encouraged to contact your primary care provider.

Vaccinations are currently offered at PHD, physician offices, and many pharmacies and grocery stores. To make an appointment, call the Panhandle Health District at (208) 415-5270.

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