



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health

Administration

Frank P. Zeidler Municipal Building, 841 North Broadway, 3rd Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202-3653 phone (414) 286-3521 fax (414) 286-5990
web site: www.milwaukee.gov/health

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Contact: Sarah DeRoo
Office (414) 286-3548
Cell (414) 708-4060

Flu Activity Increasing in City of Milwaukee

City of Milwaukee Health Department urges residents to protect their health as seasonal flu activity remains widespread

MILWAUKEE – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is currently reporting widespread flu activity across much of the country including in Wisconsin. In response, the City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) is reminding all residents to help prevent the spread of influenza.

“This season’s influenza appears to be more severe than seasons past,” said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. “The single best way to protect yourself and your family is to get a flu shot. I urge all city residents to get their vaccination if you haven’t already and to take steps to protect your health and the health of your families.”

Influenza (the flu) is among the most common respiratory illnesses in the United States, affecting millions of people each year. The virus is spread through the air when someone who is sick coughs, sneezes, or speaks. Symptoms of the seasonal flu include fever, cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, and fatigue. Though common, the flu can be serious, and it often leads to hospitalization and sometimes death in the most vulnerable populations including very young children, the elderly, and those with chronic illnesses.

“The good news is that the available flu vaccine appears to be good match for the circulating strain,” said Paul Biedrzycki, Director of Disease Control and Environmental Health. “Vaccination along with antiviral medications when prescribed by health care providers is the best way to prevent or mitigate severe illness and complications from seasonal influenza.”

It is not too late to get your flu shot. The vaccine is recommended for all individuals over 6 months of age, especially those at greatest risk for serious complications, including adults 65 and older, children younger than 5, and pregnant women. While not 100 percent effective, the vaccine can also reduce the severity of symptoms.

In addition to vaccination, the City of Milwaukee Health Department encourages all city residents to help reduce the spread of flu by:

- Washing hands often with soap and water.
- Covering your nose and mouth with your sleeve when you cough or sneeze.
- Staying home or from school or work when experiencing symptoms.

Those experiencing flu-like symptoms should also get rest and drink plenty of fluids. Contact your health care provider if symptoms are severe and/or worsen after six to seven days.

Further information can be found at www.milwaukee.gov/health.

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Think Health. Act Now!