

NEWS RELEASE

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Early Increase in Influenza Activity Highlights Need for Precautions, Vaccination

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) is seeing higher than normal influenza activity for this part of the season. Increases in the number of cases are typically reported to the NDDoH mid-December or later, and usually indicate that the flu season is starting to escalate.

“It is possible that this early increase in cases may signal an earlier-than-usual influenza season. For this reason, people who have not done so should get their flu vaccine as soon as possible,” said Jill Baber, epidemiologist with the NDDoH. “Influenza prevention is especially important around the holidays, when people are more likely to attend social gatherings and travel, which promotes flu circulation.”

Help prevent influenza by washing hands frequently, staying home when sick, covering coughs and sneezes, and getting a flu shot. Vaccination is the best way to prevent influenza and is recommended for everyone six months of age and older. So far this season, the influenza vaccine is well-matched to the circulating strains. Even when people who are vaccinated get sick, they are less likely to suffer severe complications from flu than non-vaccinated people.

For more information about influenza, visit www.ndflu.com or call 701.328.2378.

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