



# Plumas County Public Health Agency

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## For immediate release:

**Date:** December 28, 2017

**From:** Dr. Satterfield, Public Health Officer, (530) 283-6330

## Seasonal Influenza Now Epidemic in Plumas County *It's Not Too Late to Get Your Influenza Shot*

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Influenza is now reaching its seasonal epidemic levels in California and Plumas County. “The flu” is unpleasant for everyone, but is particularly dangerous for people such as children under 5 years old, people over 50, pregnant women, and people with underlying health problems like COPD, heart disease, or diabetes, where it can sometimes require hospitalization or worse.

When any of these higher risk individuals comes down with flu, it's important they be started on antiviral medications within 1-2 days. They should contact their healthcare provider to be seen promptly, and if necessary come to the emergency room. Please put on a mask when you come in the door and avoid contact with other patients.

Symptoms of influenza usually include sudden onset of fever, cough or sore throat, and muscle and body aches. These are often accompanied by headache, runny or stuffy nose, profound fatigue, and sometimes nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

The first principle of treating the flu is to stay home from work, school, or other public places until all symptoms have resolved. Flu is readily passed from person to person through the air or from objects we commonly touch like door knobs and grocery carts.

Drink lots of liquids (don't worry about solids), use acetaminophen (up to 3,000mg a day), and get plenty of rest. Aspirin should never be given to people under 18 years old experiencing the flu because it can, in rare cases, cause a serious disease called Reye's syndrome. Remember to cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing and wash your hands frequently or use an alcohol-based rub.

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Following these simple measures may also help:

- **Wash your hands often with soap and water**
- **Clean frequently the things you touch especially if other people touch them as well**
- **Do not touch your face**
- **Keep away from sick people**
- **Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, use a tissue or your elbow**
- **If you are sick or feel sick stay away from others**

And, by the way, it's not too late to get your "flu shot" (influenza immunization) to help prevent the flu, offered at Plumas County Public Health Clinics and most pharmacies and medical providers throughout the county. FluMist (nasal vaccine) is not as effective as the shot, and is no longer available – so it's got to be a shot. And although the media has reported that one of the prevalent virus strains circulating this year is not included in the vaccine, it's important to know that a perfect match between the strains in the vaccine and those which are circulating is not necessary for the vaccine to do its job. The current vaccine is still preventing lots of deaths and avoiding missed work and school, not to mention the miserable experience of having the flu.

If you have questions, please call your regular healthcare provider or Plumas County Public Health Agency at 283-6330 for more information. It takes 2 weeks for immunization to work, so now's the time to get the shot if you haven't already.