



## For Immediate Release

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Press Release Contact: George Thompson, Center for Human Development Community Relations Coordinator

### **2019 Flu activity increases in Union County**

*Eastern Oregon currently has the highest percent of influenza-like illness outpatient visits seen at emergency room and urgent care clinics in Oregon. Health officials remind people to get vaccinated, wash hands, cover coughs and sneezes, and stay home when sick.*

Center for Human Development (CHD) has received reports of increased influenza illness in the last month. "It's not too late to get a flu vaccine. Anyone over 6 months old should get one. Children over six months, adults over 65, pregnant women, and those who have weak immune systems or a chronic medical condition really shouldn't wait any longer," said Elizabeth Sieders, RN, Communicable Disease and Immunization Coordinator at CHD. "For these groups, flu can cause severe illness and even death."

As the holidays approach individuals should take extra caution in preventing transmission - especially to those who are at the highest risk for complications from the flu.

- Get vaccinated!
- Wash hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Stay home when sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Keep surfaces that may have flu germs on them cleaned and disinfected.

When more people are vaccinated against the flu, less flu can spread through the community. To receive flu vaccine please contact the Center for Human Development, your primary care provider, or your local pharmacy. If you do not have insurance or cannot afford your co-pay please contact CHD at 541 962-8800 for information on reduced cost or free vaccine.

### **About Influenza:**

Flu symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, feeling tired and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults). Some people with the flu will not have a fever.

Learn more about Flu Symptoms & Complications here: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/symptoms.htm>

### **If You Suspect You have Influenza:**

"Most people with the flu do not need medical care. If you are experiencing flu-like symptoms, we urge you to stay home and limit contact with others, unless you are severely ill. This will help to avoid spreading infection to others, particularly those who are most vulnerable. If you are mildly ill but at risk of complications from flu consider phoning your provider for advice" said Amy Miles, Infection Preventionist for Grande Ronde Hospital & Clinics (GRH).

GRH has not implemented visitor restrictions at this time, however, if you are planning to visit a patient at the hospital and have any symptoms of flu, please consider calling or sending a note to them instead. If your presence is needed, we do ask that you wear a mask.

At this point, Miles said the hospital is tracking new cases every day. The hospital may implement visitor restrictions at the discretion of Infection Control should the number of cases continue to escalate. Specifics of any visitor restrictions will be determined at the time they are imposed.

For more information on the flu, what to do if you think you have the flu, please call your primary care provider or your regular source for healthcare.

For more information on treatment or for reference for complication and emergency warning signs please follow links below.

Treatment: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/treatment/treatment.htm>

Symptoms & Complication: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/symptoms.htm#emergency%20>

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