



Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health Department Announces First Confirmed Flu Case in County

(Mason City) - The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health has their first confirmed case of influenza in the county. We've had many reports of rapid tests coming back positive for influenza, however this is the first confirmed case by the State Hygienic Lab.

"Fortunately, this year's flu vaccine covers the confirmed strain," says Jeni Stiles, Disease Prevention Specialist, Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health. "Despite warmer temperatures and spring on the approach, the influenza virus is still circulating and people need to continue taking measures to stay healthy."

Influenza is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs caused by influenza viruses. Symptoms of influenza include: fever (usually high), headache, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, chills, fatigue, body aches, and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea. Symptoms typically appear within 24-72 hours from exposure, with the illness lasting two to five days. People with the flu may be able to infect others by shedding the virus one day before getting sick to five to seven days after. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick. In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In general, the flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms such as fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, and dry cough are more common and intense. Colds are usually milder than the flu, and people with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose.

Individuals should practice the following steps to limit the spread of the flu:

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Mason City, IA 50401 • (641) 421-9300 or Toll Free: 1-888-264-2581

Facebook: Cerro Gordo County Public Health • Twitter page: <http://twitter.com/CGPublicHealth>

Web site: www.cghealth.com

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. This will block the spread of droplets from your mouth or nose that could contain germs.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with individuals who are sick.
- If you or your children become ill with the flu, limit contact with others as much as possible to help prevent spreading the illness.
- Stay home or keep your child home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone except to seek medical care.

"It's very important to keep commonly used surfaces sanitized throughout the day," says Stiles. "Influenza has been shown to live on surfaces for up to eight hours."

For more information about influenza, influenza prevention or the influenza vaccine, please call 641-421-9321 or visit our website at www.cghealth.com.

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