



**MERCER COUNTY
CELINA CITY**
Health Department
PREVENT • PROMOTE • PROTECT



To: Priority Media Release

February 23, 2017

Topic: Peak Influenza Activity

From: Julie Shaffer, BSN, RN, Director of Nursing and Deb Scheer, BSN, RN, Epidemiologist

Influenza is a very contagious disease caused by a virus. It spreads very easily through coughing and sneezing. Vaccination is the best way to prevent influenza. If you have not had your flu shot this season, we encourage you to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Influenza is reportable to the Health Department if the person is hospitalized, became ill due to an outbreak, or resulted in a pediatric death. As of 2/23/17, the Mercer County Health Department reported 30 cases of influenza in 2017. In year of 2016, 20 cases were reported and in 2015, 24 cases were reported. There are 3 outbreaks in Mercer County Facilities that have been reported since 2/3/17. No Mercer County pediatric deaths have occurred. However, the Ohio Department of Health has reported 5 Ohio children have died due to influenza this year.

Influenza:

Time of exposure until symptoms begin: 1 to 4 days

Symptoms: Sudden onset of fever, chills, headache, sore muscles. Runny nose, sore throat and cough are also common.

Spread by: Direct contact with droplets, from an infected person that are spread through sneezing, coughing, or talking; the direct spray is less than 3 feet. The droplets can be inhaled by a susceptible person or can be rubbed into the eyes, nose and/or mouth after touching contaminated objects or surfaces.

Able to be spread: 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 days after the first symptom. Children and people with compromised immune systems may be contagious for longer than 7 days.

What can be done to control or prevent influenza: Encourage yearly vaccination of all persons 6 months of age and older, unless contraindicated. Do not give a child aspirin products because aspirin has been strongly linked with Reye's Syndrome. Wash hands often and avoid touching the face. Stay home if sick and avoid sick people. Cover coughs and sneezes. See your medical provider. Antiviral drugs are prescription drugs that can be used to treat flu illness. People at high risk of serious flu complications (such as children younger than 5 years, adults 65 years of age and older, pregnant women, people with certain medical conditions, and residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities). People who are very sick with flu (such as those hospitalized because of flu) should get treatment with antiviral drugs as early as possible after illness begins. Some other people may be treated with antivirals at their health care professional's discretion. Treating high risk people or people who are very sick with flu with antiviral drugs is very important. Prompt treatment can mean the difference between having a milder illness versus very serious illness that could result in a hospital stay.

Call 419-586-3251 with any questions.

Board of Health Members CC: Diane Lefeld, Ted Bertke, Jim Moran, Julie Fleck, Timothy Barman DVM and Janet Gels