Sick with the Flu? Stay Home

Peoria City/County Health Department monitors seasonal influenza and has designated the Peoria Region as having widespread flu activity. As the seasonal flu spreads throughout the area, local hospital Emergency Departments and the emergency 9-1-1 number are responding to requests from higher numbers of individuals with flu-like symptoms.

To provide the appropriate emergency care in our community, reduce the stress to our emergency response system, and prevent spread of the flu, our emergency medical providers offer these guidelines for people with flu.

- Flu symptoms include fever, sore throat, muscle and body aches, headache, fatigue, and a runny or stuffy nose.
- Most cases of flu can be managed at home. Even though flu symptoms can seem overwhelming, most people recover in 8-10 days at home and most will not need to call an ambulance or visit the Emergency Department.
- People with severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, chest or abdominal pain, confusion, dizziness or severe vomiting should seek medical attention.
- If you have severe flu symptoms or are either very young or very old or think you need medical care, call your primary care physician first or visit an urgent care clinic such as Prompt Care, Express or First Care.
- If your doctor is unavailable, connecting with your After Hours Call Center through your hospital system will help direct you to appropriate care.
- Should you need to visit the hospital with severe flu symptoms or trouble breathing, you may encounter longer waits. Hospitals are busy with higher numbers of patients this flu season and patients who are injured, acutely ill, or have life-threatening conditions are usually seen first.

To prevent the spread of flu in our community, consider these points:

- If you feel sick or have a fever, stay home. Health experts agree that you should stay away from work, school, and shopping until you feel better. Wait until at least 24 hours after your fever breaks. Most people feel better in 8-10 days.

(more)
• If you have sick time from work, take it. Ask your workplace to review their sick time policies during this time of increased flu activity. Our healthcare system is busy right now, so workplaces might reconsider requiring a doctor’s visit to return to work.
• Avoid close contact with people you know are sick, and if you’re sick, limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.
• Wash your hands often with soap and water, and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
• Cough and sneeze into your elbow to avoid getting germs on your hands and spreading them to others.
• It’s important to take care of yourself when you have the flu by getting plenty of rest, drinking plenty of water, and taking ibuprofen or acetaminophen for aches, pains and fever. Rest seems to speed recovery.
• If you haven’t received a flu shot this season, it’s not too late. The CDC recommends everyone six months and older be vaccinated.

For additional tips on staying healthy during the flu season, visit http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm.

###