



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Peoria City/County
Health Department



Date: January 14, 2019
To: All Media
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For Immediate Release

Flu Activity Prompts Area Hospitals to Limit Visitors

During this time of increased seasonal flu activity, OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center, UnityPoint Health's Methodist, Proctor, and Pekin campuses, Hopedale Medical Complex, and Kindred Hospital are asking the public to voluntarily limit hospital visits. This is a precautionary measure to protect patients, visitors, and staff from spreading the flu and other upper respiratory illnesses.

The request for the public to limit hospital visits is based on community influenza and illness data gathered by Peoria City/County Health Department with support from Tazewell County Health Department. Data indicates increased flu activity throughout the Peoria region, prompting area hospitals to follow best practices from the Illinois Department of Public Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Effective January 14, 2019, it is requested that:

- Visitors should be at least 18 years of age and older. This will minimize patient exposure to children, who are known to be high risk for transmission of viral infections, and will also help protect children from contracting an illness while visiting the hospital.
- Individuals who are not feeling well or have had flu-like symptoms in the past seven days should not visit hospitalized patients. Flu-like symptoms include a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, cough, and/or sore throat.
- When entering and leaving a patient's room, everyone should wash their hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand foam/gel. Washing helps limit the spread of disease.
- People should cough or sneeze into their arm, shoulder, or tissue (not hands) to reduce the spread of germs that can be passed from hands touching surfaces or people.

While the voluntary request is restrictive in nature, the health care community firmly believes the request is in the best interest of patient health and safety.

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

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