



News from the Office of
ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ

NEWS RELEASE

Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein

January 9, 2013

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How to Care for Yourself or Another with the Flu

Stay Home to Avoid Flu Spread! Get Immunized and Stay healthy!

ERIE COUNTY, NY— The Erie County Department of Health (“ECDOH”) reminds everyone that this year we have a very active Influenza (Flu) season. Most people with the flu have mild illness and do not need medical care or antiviral drugs. If you get sick with flu symptoms, in most cases, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care in indicated.

“It’s important to contact your primary care physician if you are concerned about your or your child’s Flu symptoms” said **Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein**. “Emergency Departments should be utilized for emergencies, and typically flu can be treated at home.”

If you have symptoms of flu and are very sick or worried about your illness, ECDOH urges you to contact your health care provider (doctor, physician’s assistant, etc.) before you head to an a hospital Emergency Department. The Emergency Department should be used for people who are very sick. If you get sick with flu symptoms and are at high risk of flu complications or you are concerned about your illness, call your health care provider for advice. If you do not have a primary care provider and feel you need to seek a medical evaluation you can seek care at an urgent care center. If you go to the emergency room and you are not sick with the flu, you are likely catch the flu from people in the waiting room who do have the flu.

Certain people are at greater risk of serious flu-related complications (including young children, elderly persons, pregnant women and people with certain long-term medical conditions). If you are in a high risk group and develop flu symptoms, it’s best for you to contact your doctor. Remind them about your high risk status for flu.

To care for yourself or another with the flu, stay at home and rest. Avoid close contact with well people in your house so you won’t make them sick. Remember to drink plenty of water and other

clear liquids to prevent fluid loss (dehydration). Treat fever and cough with medicines available over the counter.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and ECDOH recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other things you have to do and no one else can do for you. Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from making them sick. If you must leave home, for example to get medical care, wear a facemask if you have one, or cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into your arm. Wash your hands often to keep from spreading flu to others.

“Flu season” in the United States can last through May. This year we are seeing two new flu strains in the community to which nobody is immune unless vaccinated. So, it is not too late to get immunized for this year. Annual vaccination provides the best protection against Influenza throughout Flu season.

For more Information contact:

Erie County Department of Health

<http://www.erie.gov/health>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

http://www.cdc.gov/flu/other_flu.htm