Written by Staff Reports Friday, 29 April 2022 04:08

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Department of Health announced the death of a 4-year-old Santa Fe County girl who was suffering from a flu-related illness April 21. It's New Mexico's first pediatric influenza death of the 2021-2022 season. Since the start of this flu season, DOH has identified 143 pneumonia and flu-related deaths.

"Our love and heartfelt prayers go out to the family during this difficult time," said Acting Department of Health Secretary, David R. Scrase, M.D. "Children younger than age 5 are at particular risk of flu complications, and the <u>American Academy of Pediatrics</u> advises that all children ages 6 months and older get vaccinated against the flu."

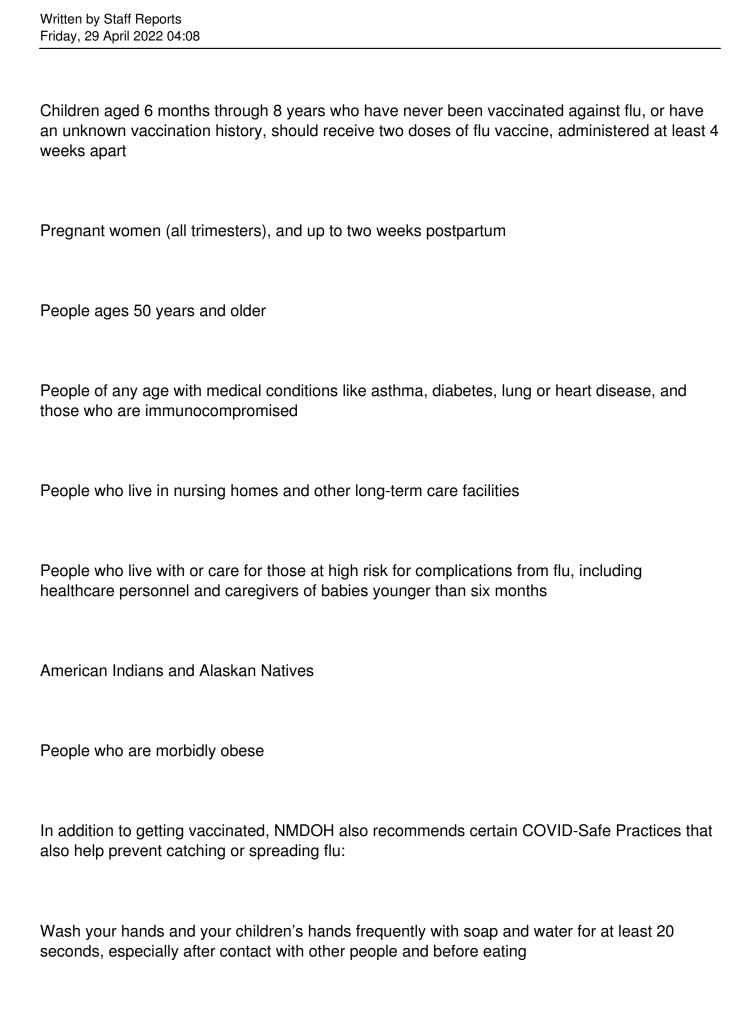
Flu hospitalization rates are higher in New Mexico, especially in children 0-4 years old. The rate of flu hospitalizations in New Mexico is more than double the national rate in this age group and is above the national average overall.

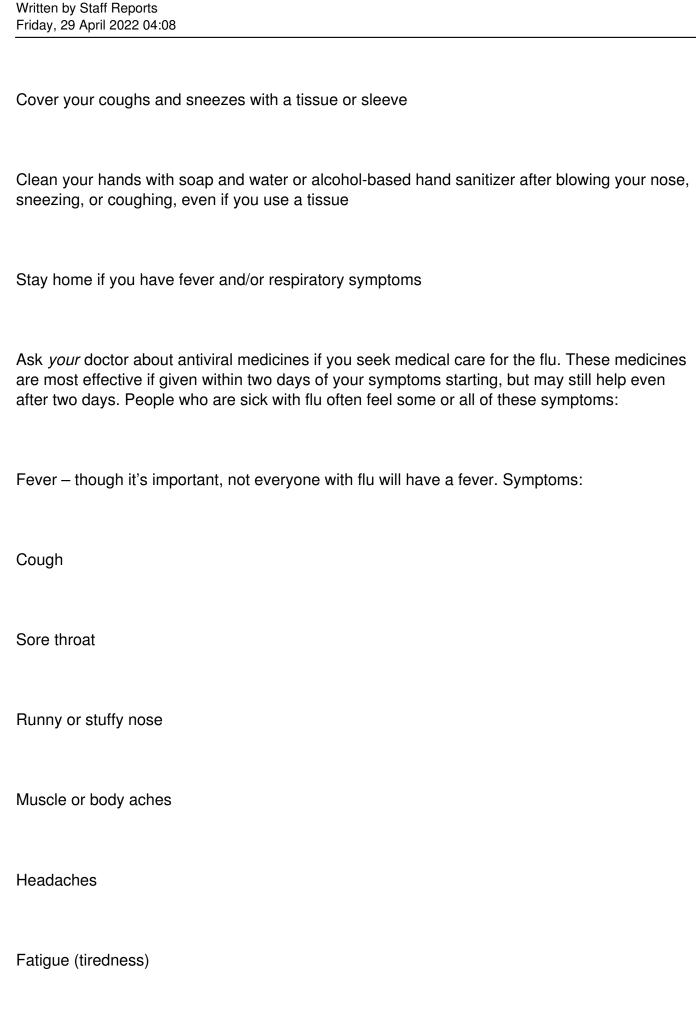
Currently in New Mexico, flu is still spreading in all regions of the state, and respiratory disease activity remains elevated. Flu seasons vary in length year-to-year, peaking most seasons between December and February, but some flu seasons can last as late as May. The percentage of visits to medical facilities for flu-like symptoms has been climbing in recent weeks, even as COVID-19-related visits have fallen to low levels.

"The flu vaccine is safe, effective and can be given alongside other routine immunizations and the COVID-19 vaccine," Scrase said.

As during all flu seasons, the Department of Health recommends everyone six months of age and older get the flu vaccine each flu season. While influenza viruses spread year-round, most of the time flu activity peaks between December and February, but activity can last as late as May. It is especially important for the following groups of people, either because they are at high risk of having serious flu-related complications, or because they live with or care for people at high risk for developing flu-related complications:

Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old





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Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

To find out more about flu vaccination clinics throughout New Mexico, you can go to HealthMap Vaccine Finder at <a href="https://vaccinefinder.org/">https://vaccinefinder.org/</a> or go to the NMDOH website: <a href="http://nmhealth.org/about/phd/idb/imp/fluv/">http://nmhealth.org/about/phd/idb/imp/fluv/</a>

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