

AMA urges Americans to take precautions to prevent flu spread

FEB 2, 2018



Statement attributable to:

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“We know from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) latest update today that this flu season is shaping up to be the most severe we’ve seen in the United States in several years — with widespread flu activity across most of the country and increases in both hospitalizations and flu-associated deaths. And, being on the front lines, my physician colleagues and I continue to see first-hand an increase in patients coming into our offices, clinics, hospitals and emergency departments with flu-like symptoms. That’s why we, as the nation’s physicians, are joining the CDC in urging all Americans to take the proper precautions to not only keep from becoming ill with the flu, but also prevent further spread of the illness to loved ones, neighbors, co-workers and others in close contact.

“First and foremost, if you haven’t yet been vaccinated against the flu, we urge you and your family to go out and get a flu shot today — that includes everyone over 6 months of age. It’s not too late to be vaccinated against the flu as the CDC reports that many more weeks of flu activity are expected this season and there are multiple strains of the virus circulating.

“If you’ve already become ill with flu-like symptoms, it’s very important that you take every measure to contain your illness by staying home from work or school, making sure to wash your hands frequently and covering your cough and sneeze. All of these measures will be critical to preventing others from being exposed to the flu and helping prevent further hospitalizations and deaths.

“It is also very important that you seek treatment from your doctor early if you have flu-like symptoms, especially if you are at high risk for developing flu-related complications including those who have a compromised immune system, are pregnant, are younger than the age of 5, or are over the age of 65. Oftentimes, if taken early, anti-viral medications can help reduce the severity of flu symptoms and speed up your recovery time.”

For more information about the current flu season, including vaccine and anti-viral medication availability, visit the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/flu.