



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Southern Nevada Health District urges residents to 'fight the flu'

LAS VEGAS - With flu season approaching, the Southern Nevada Health District is on a mission to arm people with the information - and inoculation - they need to fight the flu.

Health district officials advise that the path to resistance begins with "seasonal flu duty," which means taking key steps to prevent illness before it strikes, including:

- Getting vaccinated - Flu shots are strongly recommended for people at increased risk. This includes children 6 months to 5 years old, pregnant women, people over 50, people with chronic medical conditions and their household contacts or caregivers, and healthcare workers.
- Washing your hands often with warm soap and water for at least 30 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth as they are entry points for germs.
- Coughing and sneezing into a sleeve or tissue.
- Eating right, drinking plenty of fluids and getting enough sleep.

"One in five people will get the flu this year, which causes more than 30,000 deaths and 200,000 hospitalizations in the United States annually. By taking these simple steps, people are less likely to get sick," said Dr. Lawrence Sands, the health district's chief health officer. "Influenza is a serious respiratory illness that can result in potentially life-threatening complications for certain people."

The health district advises people who are sick to plan a "sick out" from school and work.

"If people do get sick, they should not go to work or school. It is important to know that when you are ill with the flu, the best medicine is to stay home and to rest. This is essential to recuperate from the illness and keep it from spreading to other people," said Sands.

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If a person is experiencing flu symptoms such as body aches, fever, cough, sore throat and runny nose, the health district advises people to:

- Stay home to prevent spreading illness.
- Get plenty of rest and drink a lot of fluids.
- See your doctor if you are concerned about your illness, especially if you are at high risk for complications from the flu.
- Know that antibiotics are not effective against the flu.

The health district encourages families and businesses to develop public health emergency preparedness plans that can be implemented for situations such as an influenza pandemic. It is recommended that a family emergency preparedness kit includes enough supplies to sustain everyone, including pets, for up to three weeks. The kit should contain non-perishable food, one gallon of water per person per day, medications, toiletries and cash.

To help spread its “fight the flu” message, the health district has launched a new advertising and public outreach campaign. The ad campaign, which is funded by federal grant money, features a doctor, portrayed by a sock puppet, educating a diverse group of sock puppets about flu prevention in a “town-hall” style meeting. The health district hopes that this unique approach will grab the attention of parents and children alike and encourage them to take a few simple steps to prevent spreading the flu. In addition, the Southern Nevada Health District is reaching out to community organizations, schools, large employers and others to help Clark County residents “fight the flu.”

The Southern Nevada Health District expects flu shots to be available in mid to late October. For more information about influenza, flu prevention, or flu shots visit www.FluRevolution.com or www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org.

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