



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

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**NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

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First Influenza Deaths Reported in Idaho

Two Idaho adults over the age of 60, a woman from Ada County and a woman from Kootenai County, died recently from influenza-related illnesses. These are the first deaths in Idaho attributed to influenza this season. In Idaho's last flu season, 19 people died from flu-related illnesses.

"Our condolences go out to the families of those who died from complications of the flu," said Dr. Leslie Tengelsen, deputy state epidemiologist for the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. "This underscores how important it is for all of us to take precautions to avoid influenza infections. Now is the time to visit your health care provider, local public health district, or pharmacy to get vaccinated as soon as possible."

Everyone older than 6 months is recommended to get the flu vaccine. This year, public health officials are recommending that children ages 2 through 8 years get the nasal spray flu vaccine since it may work better than the flu shot in younger children.

Most people who get influenza recover after a few days, but some people may develop serious complications and die. Every year, flu contributes to the deaths of 36,000 people in the United States and causes more than 200,000 hospitalizations.

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness that infects 5% to 20% of people every year. Symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, and sometimes a cough and sore

throat. Complications of the flu can lead to more serious illnesses, including death. People who are especially vulnerable to complications of the flu include:

- Pregnant women
- People 50 years old and older
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, heart or lung diseases
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- People who live with, or care for, those at high risk for complications from flu.

In addition to getting vaccinated, people can protect themselves from the influenza virus and other respiratory illnesses by practicing good health hygiene habits. To avoid infection, everyone is urged to:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing to prevent infecting other people. Avoid people who appear to be sick.
- Stay home from work when you're sick. Keep your children home from school if they are sick.
- Wash your hands frequently, especially after being out in the public. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth until you wash your hands with soap and water.
- Get plenty of rest, drink plenty of liquids, eat nutritious foods and take part in physical activity to stay healthy.

For information about influenza and how to stay healthy, please visit www.cdc.gov/flu or <http://flu.idaho.gov>

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