



# SAN BENITO COUNTY

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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**PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES**

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

## PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 28 March 2019

From: Sam Perez, Public Health Information Officer

Subject: Spike in Influenza Activity

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**(San Benito County)** This year's US flu season is already a long one, with illness activity still widespread in 44 states, including California and is expected to continue for several more weeks.

"Typically influenza activity reaches its highest levels between December and February, and may continue through May, however we are now seeing a spike in flu infections due to the H3N2 strain," stated Dr. Newel, Health Officer for San Benito County.

People at highest risk for severe complications from influenza include adults 65 years of age and older, children less than 5 years old, pregnant women, and those with certain medical conditions like asthma, heart disease, and weakened immune systems.

Public Health recommends that all individuals six months of age and older be vaccinated against influenza. "Influenza vaccination is a safe and effective way to protect you and your family from the flu," recommended Dr. Newel. "It's not too late to get vaccinated."

In addition to getting the vaccine, health officials advise people to take the following steps to protect themselves and loved ones from influenza as well as other respiratory illness.

- Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue.
- If you do not have a tissue, cough into your elbow.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Stay home when you are sick, and stay home until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours.

Symptoms of the flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches and fatigue. People at higher risk of severe disease who show flu symptoms should contact their medical provider. Medical providers may prescribe antiviral medications that reduce the severity and duration of illness. Antibiotics are not effective against the flu.

For more information regarding the flu, please go to the Centers for Disease Control website at <https://www.cdc.gov>, the California Department of Public Health website at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov>, call Public Health Services at (831) 637-5367 or go to our website at <http://hhsa.cosb.us/>.

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