



Northwest Medical Center

A Tradition of Community Healthcare

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

It's Not too Late to Stay Healthy this Influenza Season

Northwest Medical Center encourages vaccination as prevention against the seasonal flu

Albany, MO – January 17, 2014 - An estimated 27 percent of the Missouri population is burdened with congestion, coughing spells, body aches, fatigue and fever this flu season. As we approach the peak of flu activity in Northwest Missouri, Northwest Medical Center wants to remind the public that a simple flu shot can prevent the potential dangers, discomfort and stress associated with the flu, and encourage vaccination.

The flu is a highly contagious virus that usually enters the body through the mouth, nose or eyes. If someone who is infected coughs or sneezes, the virus can then become airborne, spreading quickly to those in close proximity to them.

"The flu vaccination is the best way to decrease severity and often times decreases the chances of getting the flu, and is an important measure to protect your friends and family members as well," says Lori Bishop, RN, Inpatient Services Director and Infection Control Nurse at Northwest Medical Center. "It's absolutely not too late to get the flu vaccine."

Experts recommend that everyone over the age of six months receive the flu vaccine and stresses the importance of the shot for the following high risk groups:

- Children under the age of five
- Adults age 65 and older
- Pregnant women
- Individuals with certain chronic or immunosuppressive conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease and asthma
- Individuals under age 19 who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- Healthcare Workers
- Individuals caring for immune suppressed loved one or family member

"Should you come down with the flu, antiviral drugs are highly effective if taken within 48 hours of your first flu symptoms," added Bishop. "Taking these drugs can also reduce the amount of time you are sick and make you less contagious to others."

In addition to the seasonal flu vaccine, general health routines help protect against the virus and other illnesses. Practicing good hand hygiene is the most important way to avoid spreading the flu virus. Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze and maintain healthy habits like getting plenty of rest and exercise. Good nutrition and drinking plenty of fluids is also a good defense to help you stay healthy.



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As in previous years, Northwest Medical Center continues to leverage the Missouri Hospital Association's EMSsystems technology to monitor and track influenza cases.

"We haven't seen the severity of the flu being reported in other areas yet, but we are tracking it and will update the public as information becomes available," says Bishop. "We want our community informed as much as possible so they can take the proper precautions."

The flu vaccine is available at any Northwest Medical Center clinic located in Albany, Stanberry, Grant City and New Hampton. More information about influenza, as well as flu vaccine locations can be found at www.northwestmedicalcenter.org or by calling 660-726-3941.

About- Northwest Medical Center has provided high-quality health services to residents in Northwest Missouri since 1957. Along with five satellite clinics and a full-service home-health agency, Northwest Medical Center continues its tradition of community healthcare utilizing leading-edge diagnostic equipment and boasting one of the top emergency room facilities in the region.

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