

# State of Montana DPHHS HAN ADVISORY

Distributed via the DPHHS Health Alert Network (HAN) System

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**DPHHS Health Alert Hotline 1-800-701-5769**

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## **DPHHS Recommendations:**

### **First Confirmed Case of Influenza (B) for the 2008-2009 Influenza Season**

A child from Deer Lodge County is the first confirmed case of influenza (B) for the 2008-2009 influenza season. *In order to confirm influenza early in the season, please encourage providers to send specimens to the Montana Public Health Laboratory for polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing.* Vaccination efforts should continue throughout the season, including after influenza activity has begun in the community. The ACIP document, "Prevention and Control of Influenza - 2008" provides more information about types of vaccines, target groups and use of antivirals. (See resources below)

#### ACTION REQUESTED

- \* Remind providers to submit influenza quick test positive specimens to the Montana Public Health Laboratory (MPHL) for PCR confirmation (Questions? Call the MPHL at 1-800-821-7284)
- \* Continue to vaccinate throughout the influenza season, including after influenza activity has begun

#### RESOURCES

2008 ACIP Recommendations: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip/index.htm>

U.S. Influenza Surveillance Reports: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivity.htm>

Montana Influenza Surveillance Reports: <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/PHSD/epidemiology/commun-disease-epi-surv.shtml>

Additional Information: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>

Cover Your Cough Posters: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>



The goal of Montana's Health Alert Network is to transmit information to local public health authorities as quickly as possible, and assign a suitable priority to the message that is sensitive to the impact of a health-related event providing information relative to the public health and safety

of Montanans. For questions or comments relative to Montana's HAN system you may contact the DPHHS HAN Coordinator, Gerry Wheat at <<mailto:gwheat@mt.gov>>

**Categories of Health Alert messages:**

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

You have received this message based upon the information contained within our emergency notification data base. If you have a different or additional e-mail or fax address that you would like us to use please notify us as soon as possible by e-mail at [hhshan@mt.gov](mailto:hhshan@mt.gov) <mailto:hhshan@mt.gov>

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## **NEWS FROM THE MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

For immediate release

December 4, 2008

Contact: Bonnie Barnard, Communicable Disease Surveillance, DPHHS, 406-444-0273

Jon Ebelt, Public Information Officer, DPHHS, 406-444-0936

### **Influenza Case Confirmed in Deer Lodge County**

A child from Deer Lodge County is the first person with confirmed influenza this season, the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) confirmed Thursday, December 4, 2008.

According to Bonnie Barnard, communicable disease surveillance epidemiologist for DPHHS, symptoms of influenza include abrupt onset of head, joint and muscle aches; fever, chills, nasal congestion and dry cough.

“Influenza is not just a nuisance disease,” Barnard stressed. It is responsible for over 36,000 deaths and more than 200,000 influenza related hospitalizations in the United States each year. The rate of hospitalization is highest for those aged 65 and older with underlying medical conditions.

Vaccination remains the best prevention for influenza and influenza related complications. Vaccination is recommended for all children aged 6 months to 18 years; persons aged 50 years and older; health care workers; residents of chronic care facilities; and others who have any condition that might predispose them to complications from influenza illness, e.g., chronic diseases, immunosuppression, pregnancy.

State health officials would like Montanans to know it is not too late to get a flu shot from their local health provider or health department. Montana’s flu season has just begun. “Vaccination is the best way for Montanans to protect themselves and their loved ones against the virus,” said Liz LeLacheur of the DPHHS Immunization Program. “There’s no shortage of the flu vaccine this year, and now is the time to get vaccinated.”

It takes 10 to 14 days for people to develop antibodies to influenza once they have received the vaccine. During this time, they are still susceptible to the disease. “Influenza typically peaks in January or February in Montana so people should continue to get vaccinated through the first few months of the year,” Barnard added.

Adults can be contagious from the day before they start feeling sick to about five days after symptoms begin. Children can be contagious for up to 10 days.

In addition to vaccination, health officials urge people to take other precautions to help limit the spread of the disease, including:

- Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently, especially after contact with anyone who may be ill;
- Cover your the nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
- Stay home from work, school, daycare and large gatherings when you’re sick;
- Get plenty of rest; and

- Eat nutritious foods and drink plenty of fluids.

Contact your doctor or local health clinic for the best place to go for your flu shot. For more information go to <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/flu.shtml>.

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