

PRESS RELEASE

Health Advisory

February 15th, 2024



Whitman County
Public Health

Alert Categories



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; no immediate action necessary.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First reported flu death for Whitman County's 2023–2024 flu season

Questions regarding this information may be directed to the following:

Whitman County Public Health

Disease Prevention Program, DiseasePrevention@whitmancounty.net

Summary

The flu virus claimed the life of one Whitman County resident – Whitman County's first flu-related death this season, according to Whitman County Public Health.

What is the Flu?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat and lungs. Some people, such as those over the age of 65, young children, pregnant women, American Indian/Alaska Natives and those with certain health conditions, are at a higher risk for serious complications.

Flu Symptoms

People infected with the flu often have mild symptoms and can manage their symptoms on their own.

People who have the flu may feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever (usually $\geq 101^{\circ}\text{F}$) or chills
- Headache
- Extreme tiredness
- Cough
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore Throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults

In rare cases, individuals may develop serious complications with severe symptoms.

Emergency symptoms may include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Ongoing dizziness
- Seizures
- Worsening of existing medical conditions
- Severe weakness or muscle pain

In children, the bluish color of the skin and dehydration are considered emergency symptoms.

If you experience emergency symptoms of the flu, seek medical care right away.

Some people, including those over 65 or under five years of age, and people with certain conditions are at high risk for serious complications from the flu and should talk to a healthcare provider right away if experiencing symptoms. Taking antiviral medicine to treat the flu may shorten the length of your illness and help prevent more serious problems.

How the Flu Spreads

Flu viruses mainly spread from person to person by droplets. This happens when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are sent through the air and land on the mouth, nose, or eyes of people nearby. Flu viruses may also spread when a person touches droplets on an object or surface and then touches their mouth, nose, or eyes before washing their hands.

Prevent the Spread of Flu

There are many actions you can take to prevent the spread of the flu:

- Get immunized every year. It is the single best way to prevent the flu. It is recommended that all people six months of age or older get a flu immunization.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick. Also, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Wash your hands after disposing of used tissues. If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve, not your hands.

- Wash your hands. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or sanitizers may be used.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are frequently spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Use antiviral drugs as prescribed by your healthcare provider for the flu.