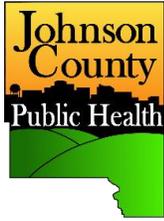


A healthful and supportive environment where all people of Johnson County can achieve optimal physical, mental, and social well-being.



Dave Koch, Director

Press Release

For Immediate Release
February 2, 2018

Contact: Dave Koch, Director
319-356-6040

The current flu season is significantly worse than a typical flu season as evidenced by increased visits to Emergency Departments and local clinics. Johnson County Public Health, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Mercy Iowa City, and the VA Hospital are working together to share important information regarding signs and symptoms and preventative measures. We have not yet reached the peak, so it's still important to understand how to stay well and what to do if you or someone in your family gets sick.

- **If you get sick STAY HOME!!!** Symptoms of the flu include fever, cough, body aches and sore throat. You can infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick.
- **If your children are sick, keep them home from school or daycare and notify the school office about their illness.**
- Stay home until symptoms are gone and you are fever-free for 24 hours without the need for fever reducing medications like Tylenol or Advil.
- Everyone in your family should get a flu shot. It's not too late, so call your doctor or your pharmacy. We also have flu shots at Johnson County Public Health and you can call **319-356-6042** for an appointment.
- If you are out and about and feel unwell, make sure that you cover your cough and throw away used tissues right away. Wash your hands often or use alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Some people are at high risk for complications from the flu, those under 5 and over 65, pregnant women, people with asthma or heart disease, people with other serious illnesses (such as kidney disease or sickle cell), and people with a weakened immune system (such as people with HIV or who are on chemo). These people need to be especially careful and seek medical care if they become sick with flu-like symptoms.

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- If you have severe symptoms, such as being unable to keep down food and drink, or trouble breathing, go to an Emergency Department. If your symptoms are less serious, you may be able to avoid seeking care in an Emergency Department and becoming exposed to others who do have severe symptoms.
- If you need to see a medical provider here are some options:
 - Call your regular doctor's office.
 - Go to an Urgent Care Clinic (both Mercy Iowa City and UIHC have these)
 - <https://uihc.org/ui-quickcare>
 - <https://www.mercyiowacity.org/Default.aspx?id=125&sid=1&CWFriendlyUrl=true>
 - Use an online medical service like UleCare. They are available right on your smartphone or home computer 24 hours a day.
<http://www.thesignalcenter.com/digital-health/ecare/>
 - You can call and talk to a nurse about your illness 24/7.
 - <https://uihc.org/call-center>
 - <https://www.mercyiowacity.org/Default.aspx?id=31&sid=1&CWFriendlyUrl=true>
 - If you don't have medical insurance you can still go to an Urgent Care clinic and pay out of pocket or you can call the Iowa City Free Medical Clinic (319-337-4459) for an appointment. Please note that the Free Clinic has limited services and hours.
- Signs that you are sick enough to need to go to the Emergency Room include:
 - Trouble breathing
 - Chest pain
 - Bluish skin color
 - Not drinking enough fluids to stay hydrated
 - Not waking up or interacting with others / confusion
 - Children who are so irritable they do not want to be held
 - Symptoms that improved but then return with a fever and worse cough
 - Fever and rash in children.

For more information, please visit the IDPH (<https://idph.iowa.gov/influenza/faq>) or CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/index.html>) websites or please call Johnson County Public Health at **319-356-6040** for more information.

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