

## **Seasonal Influenza Information**

The flu season hit early and hard this year. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated each year and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the influenza vaccination for anyone who has not yet been vaccinated.

Naval Hospital Beaufort still has sufficient quantities of vaccine on hand to immunize any eligible TRICARE beneficiaries who have not yet received it. The hospital's immunization department is open Monday–Friday, from 7:45 a.m. until 3:30 p.m., and vaccinations are available on a walk-in basis.

### **How Can I Stay Healthy During Flu Season?**

In addition getting vaccinated, there are several ways to protect yourself and stay healthy during flu season:

1. When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with tissue and throw away the tissue after use. If you don't have a tissue, cough in the sleeve of your upper arm.
2. Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose and then shaking hands.
4. Avoid close contact with sick people.

### **How Do I Know If I Have the Flu?**

Symptoms can be mild to severe and sometimes deadly. Typical symptoms include:

1. Fever or feeling feverish
2. Chills
3. Cough
4. Sore throat
5. Runny or stuffy nose
6. Muscle or body aches
7. Headaches
8. Fatigue (tiredness)

Some individuals may experience vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults. Not everyone with flu will have a fever.

Even healthy people can get the flu and serious problems from the flu can occur at any age, but certain people have a higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications if they get sick. This includes people 65 years and older, people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), pregnant women, and young children.

### **What Do I Do if I Think I Have the Flu?**

If you think you have the flu, the best thing you can do is stay home and rest! This allows you to avoid coming into contact with well people and spreading the flu. You should also drink plenty of water to

prevent dehydration. Symptoms such as fever and cough can be treated with over the counter medications. You should be able to make a full recovery within a few days to less than two weeks without seeking medical care. However, if you are very sick, are pregnant, or have a medical condition that puts you at a higher risk for flu-related complications, please contact your doctor.

Seek immediate medical attention if any of these symptoms occur:

1. Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
2. Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
3. Dizziness/Confusion
4. Severe or persistent vomiting
5. Flu-symptoms that improve, but then return with fever and worse cough.

Naval Hospital Beaufort's emergency department is always open and appointments for those patients assigned to primary care at the hospital's Medical Home Port can be made by calling 843-228-5175.

### **Additional Resources**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services site with comprehensive information about influenza.

- <http://www.flu.gov>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) site with comprehensive influenza information to include downloads and current data on flu activity.

- <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) website with more localized information about flu prevention and treatment.

- <http://www.scdhec.gov/flu>