Health Officials Warn That This Year's Flu Season Looks Severe

January 12, 2017

Flu season has officially started to peak across the country, according to the CDC, and this year's epidemic may strike hard. This is why health experts are urging everyone, especially those most at risk for flu complications—the very young, the elderly, the chronically ill and pregnant women—to get their shots before it's too late, ABC's KTBS reports.

In its latest update on flu season, the CDC announced that H3N2 is this year's most prominent strain. The relatively tough virus hits the oldest and youngest hardest. In addition, influenza H1N1 and influenza B viruses are also circulating throughout the country. Most years, the vaccine offers up to 60 percent protection against all these viruses. But this year's vaccine may be less effective against H3N2.

Still, getting vaccinated is the best way to protect against the flu. If you get sick after receiving the flu shot, the benefit is that you may experience a milder illness than if you didn't get the shot.

Although we're not at the height of the flu season, experts cautioned people not to wait until the virus's activity peaks. Health officials stressed that it's not too late for individuals to get a shot. The body can take several weeks to produce enough antibodies for maximum protection against the virus after the vaccine is administered.

Currently, the CDC pinpointed the heaviest flu activity along the country's east and west coasts. But the virus is also circulating throughout the middle of the country. "The flu is everywhere," warned Lynette Brammer, MPH, an epidemiologist with the CDC. "It's not uncommon to see a second wave of influenza B go through after the wave of A."

In a typical flu season, more than 200,000 Americans are hospitalized for flu-related complications. What's more, deaths connected to the virus have totaled as many as 49,000 in one year. This is why the CDC recommends that anyone age 6 months or older get a flu shot and urges mothers of newborns to get vaccinated to help protect their infants.

In its flu guidelines this year, the CDC did not endorse the nasal spray flu vaccine. The agency said this kind of vaccine is less effective than the regular one. Additionally, the CDC said the antiviral drugs Tamiflu and Relenza could help you overcome an infection.

Click here to learn more about the flu shot and why you should get one.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/health-officials-warn-years-flu-season-looks-severe