

# Health officials encourage flu control measures during unusually active flu season

This year's flu activity is unusually high, and Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) officials encourage all Mississippians to continue to protect themselves against the flu and to practice basic prevention measures to help prevent the spread of flu. While flu season typically peaks in January through March in Mississippi, the state has already been at a widespread activity level for several weeks.

"Mississippi is seeing the impact of high levels of influenza this season with more than 100 reported flu outbreaks in nursing homes and other long-term care settings," said MSDH State Epidemiologist Dr. Paul Byers. "Additionally, MSDH has received reports from hospitals across the state that are experiencing increased admissions to ICUs and increased visits to Emergency Departments which have

hospitals operating at full capacity."

Byers said that some hospitals, nursing homes, and other long-term care facilities may be restricting visitors and limiting access to public waiting areas. The public can assist hospitals and other facilities in their efforts to reduce the spread of flu:

- If you are ill do not visit family or friends—ill visitors should wait at least 48 hours after symptoms resolve before considering a visit;
- Do not take groups to visit, or accompany family or friends to the hospital/healthcare facility or emergency department;
- Limit or don't take children to visit at the facility;
- All visitors should cover coughs and sneezes and practice hand hygiene;
- Visitors should only visit their family or friends; they should not visit or have con-

tact with other patients or residents;

- Patients, families and visitors should follow any additional recommendations/restrictions set forth by the healthcare facility.

Dr. Byers said the flu shot is still the best protection against flu-related complications, and while it may not prevent infection, it can drastically reduce the severity and length of illness and prevent serious complications such as hospitalization and even death.

Flu shots are recommended for all those six months and older.

The type of flu virus that is primarily causing illness in Mississippi and nationwide is the H3N2 flu strain, which especially affects individuals over 65 years of age and young children, increasing their risk of complications and hospitalization.

Basic infection control

## IN AND AROUND **LEXINGTON** BY LEONA (LENA) FIELDS

Selena Morris' mother in Tchula broke her hip. She is recuperating in the Oasis Center in Yazoo City.

Mrs. Alline Wilks will be cremated wherever her daughter lives. I don't have the full details. I can not say whether or not the ashes will be brought back to Lexington for burial. Mrs. Wilks was well known for heartfelt singing in Lebanon and Antioch Church Choirs.

Fred Horton is gradually

improving. I talked to his mother. She said one day he was able to warm up some left overs for dinner. That's a big + (plus) for a stroke victim. Before his stroke he was a number one cook. Keep praying for his improvement. One day he talked to me on the phone. I could understand what he was saying.

Elder Curtis Cobbins is a loving and caring husband as he keeps his wife, Mrs. Margaret, at home out of this

winter weather. He says she is doing pretty good.

Goldia Landfair went to the doctor Thursday, January 11.

Mr. Willie Beamon of Tchula is still hospitalized.

The Volunteer Homemakers Sewing Club at the Multi-Purpose Building in Lexington will raffle off their second quilt on February 14. Tickets are \$1.00. Funds raised will be used to buy supplies to keep the sewing club in operation. This club helps people in need for example, dialysis patients, nursing home patients, victims of house fires, needy families, etc.

Supervisor Larry Davis won the first quilt. You could be the second winner if you buy a ticket! You can see the quilt on Facebook at the Holmes County Extension page.

The senior citizens at the feeding center in Lexington celebrated a combined birthday party for three people, Mrs. Rosie Howze, Mrs. Annie Sago and Mrs. Jannie Banks.

measures can also reduce the spread of flu and should be taken whether or not individuals are vaccinated. These measures include covering your mouth when coughing and sneezing, staying at home when you or your children are sick for at least 24 hours after fever is gone, and washing your hands frequently.

Those 18 and under who are eligible for the Vaccines

for Children program can receive flu vaccination at county health department clinics for \$10. Insurance, Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is accepted for children's flu shots.

To locate a county health department clinic in your area or for more information on flu, visit the MSDH website at [www.HealthyMS.com/flu](http://www.HealthyMS.com/flu).

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