

Wheeling-Ohio County
Health Department



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Public Health Advisory

March 9, 2009

There has been an increase in the amount of absenteeism in schools in both Ohio and Marshall County. Symptoms of flu like illness including body aches, headaches, sore throat and fever >101 are being reported.

Should your patient develop any of these symptoms and seek medical attention, the Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department and Marshall County Health Department is recommending that specific testing be done.

Naso-pharyngeal testing is preferred; however, the quick tests will provide the necessary results. Information on the Naso-pharyngeal testing is provided in this health advisory.

In addition the CDC is advising that preliminary data indicates that the prevalence of influenza A (H1N1) virus strains resistant to the antiviral medication oseltamivir is high. Therefore, CDC is issuing interim recommendations for antiviral treatment and chemoprophylaxis of influenza during the 2008-09 influenza season. When influenza A (H1N1) virus infection or exposure is suspected, zanamivir or a combination of oseltamivir and rimantadine are more appropriate options than oseltamivir alone. Local influenza surveillance data and laboratory testing can help with physician decision-making regarding the choice of antiviral agents for their patients. The 2008-09 influenza vaccine is expected to be effective in preventing or reducing the severity of illness with currently circulating influenza viruses, including oseltamivir-resistant influenza A (H1N1) virus strains. Since influenza activity remains low and is expected to increase in the weeks and months to come, CDC recommends that influenza vaccination efforts continue.

Remember that hand washing, covering your cough and good personal hygiene can reduce transmission especially in the school and work setting.

Seasonal influenza is still at its peak and the flu shot is still available in limited supplies at all County Health Departments in the Northern Panhandle.

Please contact the **Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department at 304.234.3682** or the **Marshall County Health Department at 304.845.7840** to get information on obtaining the Naso-pharyngeal testing kit or the flu shot.