



FirstCare Closely Monitoring Flu Season in Texas

Friday, December 26, 2014

With the arrival of flu season in Texas, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that influenza activity continues to increase across the United States, including influenza-associated hospitalizations and deaths. For more information from the CDC on this year's flu season, visit www.cdc.gov/flu.

As flu activity is expected to increase in the coming weeks, FirstCare wants to remind everyone that if you have not been vaccinated this flu season, get your flu vaccine now.

Flu experts recommend an annual flu vaccine for everyone, ages six months and older. Benefits from flu vaccination include reductions in illnesses, related doctors' visits, and missed work or school. While some of the viruses spreading this season are different from what is in the vaccine, vaccination can still provide protection and might reduce severe outcomes such as hospitalization and death.

FirstCare Health Plans recommends a three-pronged approach to fighting flu:

- ★ First, get vaccinated.
- ★ Second, take everyday preventive actions to help stop the spread of germs by avoiding contact with sick people, staying at home if you have a fever and limiting contact with others as much as possible, covering your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, and washing your hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub (sanitizer).
- ★ And finally, take antiviral medications to treat flu illness if your doctor prescribes them to you.

If you want to get vaccinated and need assistance, our **Customer Service Team** can help you find a health care professional.