



News Release

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Three flu-related deaths reported in Washington as flu activity rises

First flu-related deaths reported since 2019-2020 flu season

OLYMPIA – Flu activity across Washington has risen to moderate levels and, for the first time in roughly two years, Washington state is reporting multiple flu-related deaths. Three individuals, all age 65 or older, who tested positive for influenza A have died. The third death will be included in this week’s [Washington State Influenza Update](#), which the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) releases every Friday.

Flu is a highly contagious disease that can cause severe illness and death, even in healthy people. Last season, [flu activity was historically low](#), likely due to increased COVID-19 precautions, such as mask wearing, remote learning, occupancy limits, and work from home measures taken during the pandemic. The last time Washington reported a flu-related death was during the 2019-2020 flu season when there were 114 influenza-associated deaths, including 36 deaths at this point in the year.

“Hospitalizations across the state remain high due to omicron, and other respiratory viruses like influenza could overload them even more,” said Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett, MD, MPH, Chief Science Officer. “Take steps now to get you and your family vaccinated against the flu. Vaccination will help keep you and your family healthy and out of the hospital, especially those with chronic health conditions.”

Vaccination against influenza and COVID-19 can also reduce the risk that a person might get coinfecting with both viruses at the same time. To prevent severe outcomes from the flu, DOH recommends everyone 6 months of age and older get their annual flu vaccine. For a list of locations, visit [Vaccines.gov](#). Additionally, everyone should wash their hands often with soap and water, cover their coughs and sneezes, and stay home when they’re sick. Masks also help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and the flu.

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Although the timing and duration of flu seasons vary, flu activity typically peaks between December and February, but significant activity can last as late as May. For weekly flu activity reports, educational materials, vaccine information, and other flu prevention resources, visit www.KnockOutFlu.org.

The [DOH website](#) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. [Find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#). Sign up for the DOH blog, [Public Health Connection](#).

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