

# Bellevue Medical Partners, PLLC

## The Flu Season Has Arrived

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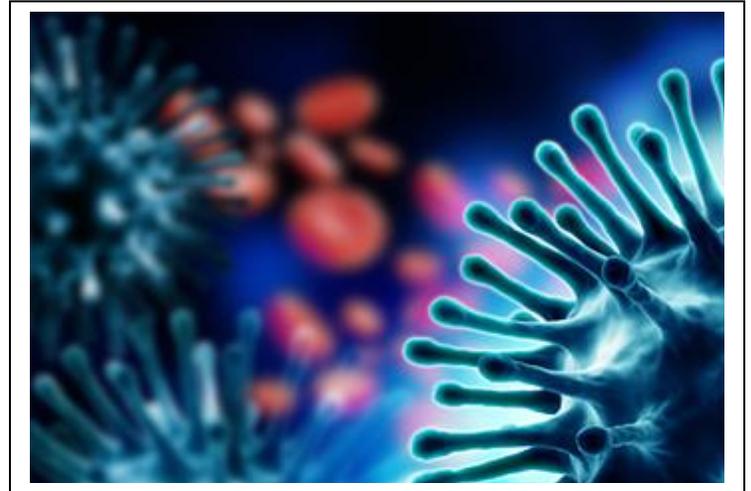
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*It's not too late to get a flu shot. We currently have vaccinations in stock. Call today for an appointment!*

The winter months are a common time to see a variety of viral illnesses in the community, particularly cold and flu viruses. Often the two terms are used interchangeably, but the “flu” or influenza, is distinct from other infections. It is caused by influenza virus and cases are on the upswing now in early January.

King County has seen a significant rise in cases since late December 2016, so far with numbers higher than the previous 5 years. It is felt that the H3N2 strain this year, (which is included in the vaccine) is more virulent, or stronger, this year than in recent years.

Influenza can be a serious illness, particularly for the very young, pregnant, elderly or those with chronic health conditions (ex. heart & lung disease or diabetes). Complications from the flu can include pneumonia, dehydration and worsening of underlying medical conditions.



### How Do I prevent influenza?

There are several ways to prevent flu. Vaccination against influenza is the best measure as it may prevent or lessen the severity of the flu. This year's vaccine does cover the H3N2 strain that we are currently seeing in the community.

Flu spreads by droplets made when infected people sneeze, cough or talk. These droplets can be inhaled, or land on objects (like the grocery cart, door knob, pencil) that are then touched by you. You later touch your eyes, nose or mouth, or touch food that you ingest and expose yourself to the

virus. Therefore the best prevention is **FREQUENT HAND WASHING** during the day and before meals. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.

Other preventative measures include limiting your exposure to sick contacts and crowds when able. Keep your immune system at its best with good sleep practices and healthy diet and hydration.

### How long is someone with flu contagious?

Typically infectivity is highest one day before onset of symptoms and up to 5-7 days after symptoms start. People infected with influenza will

## Influenza, continued

***“All long-term care facility residents who have confirmed or suspected influenza should receive antiviral treatment immediately.”***

***CDC.gov***

typically develop symptoms 1-4 days after exposure.

### **What do I do if I think I have influenza or if I am exposed to someone with flu?**

Flu classically causes fever, body aches and

headache, but can also cause sore throat, cough and congestion. If you think you might have the flu, there is antiviral therapy available by prescription which may prevent flu after exposure or shorten the course of symptoms. It is important to call us as soon as possible to benefit from this medication.

The flu vaccine can not cause influenza.



Look here:

You must choose the correct option from the voice messaging system to have the on-call doctor paged!



## Office Reminders

During evening hours and weekends, be sure you listen to the entire recording for the office each time you call! You should choose the option to have the on-call doctor paged for any immediate needs that you have and you will be prompted to leave a message with your name and phone number. The system will then page the on-call doctor. If you choose the option to leave a general voicemail message instead of the option to have the doctor paged, we will not receive those messages until the next business day.

### Vacation Dates

The physicians have the following upcoming vacation dates. Remember that when one physician is away, the other two physicians will be available to meet your needs.  
Dr Kaner: January 19<sup>th</sup>-February 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Dr Mills: February 20<sup>th</sup>-February 24<sup>th</sup>

## Decoding Over-the-Counter cold and flu meds

Trying to sort out what to purchase at the pharmacy for your cough or congestion? Here are some quick tips and medications that are generally safe to try:

**Guaifenesin** often labeled as “Mucinex” is an expectorant. This means it will help mobilize deep secretions (ie help to make phlegm thin so you can cough it up) which helps clear infection and reduces risks of developing complications like pneumonia.

**Dextromethorphan**, often labeled “Robitussin” or “Delsym” is a cough suppressant that works by suppressing the central brain “cough center” reducing the drive to cough. Robitussin DM is a combination of guaifenesin and dextromethorphan.

If you have hypertension, be wary of pseudoephedrine-containing products such as “Sudafed” (that reduces nasal congestion) because they can increase blood pressure.

Don't forget the power of **acetaminophen** (Tylenol)! Dosing that does not exceed 3 grams in a day is considered safe and can help relieve sore throat and body aches from illness. Always check labels as acetaminophen can be added to over-the-counter medications, making it possible to exceed this dose.

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Feel free to use e-mail, but for urgent needs, please remember to call us as there may be a delay in e-mail until the next business day.