

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

Flu Cases Spike Across the Roanoke Valley

Halifax Regional Emphasizes Flu Vaccination as the Best Measure of Prevention

ROANOKE RAPIDS, NC (December 30, 2014)—Halifax Regional is witnessing an exceptionally high spike in documented flu cases across the Roanoke Valley making flu prevention measures extremely important. Since August, the Medical Center has documented over 30 confirmed cases of influenza, an increase of 600% from the same period last year.

Flu vaccinations are still available. Getting vaccinated is still the best measure to increase chances of avoiding the flu and decrease the risk of influenza spreading to others, particularly those at greater risk. In October 2011, Halifax Regional implemented mandatory flu shots for all physicians, staff, board members, and volunteers.

In response to this exceptionally high spike in influenza activity, Halifax Regional is implementing immediate visitation guidelines to decrease the spread of influenza among patients, visitors, and Medical Center staff. Effective immediately, Halifax Regional will implement the following visitation restrictions:

- Children age five and under are not permitted in the Medical Center unless the child has an appointment or needs medical treatment;
- Teens and older children are asked not to visit due to the high rate of influenza among those age groups
- Pregnant women and adults age 65 and older are discouraged from visiting the Medical Center;
- Visitors with any flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea) will not be permitted in the Medical Center;
- Only one adult will be allowed to accompany a patient in the Emergency Care Center; and
- Visitors should wash their hands before entering a patient room and upon leaving the room. Hand sanitizer is available throughout the hospital in convenient dispensers.

Flu prevention stations have been set-up at all entrances and are placed throughout the Medical Center. The stations include personal protective equipment, such as hand sanitizer and face masks, to keep patients, visitors, and staff safe.

Basic precautionary measures should be taken as proper hygiene remains the best defense to prevent common viral respiratory diseases. Personal hygiene and prevention of germ-spreading includes:

- Frequent hand-washing with soap and water;
- Cover mouth when coughing and sneezing; and
- Sanitary disposal of discharges from mouth and nose.

The flu is a respiratory virus that poses a serious public health risk. The flu can lead to hospitalization and in some cases death. While the flu can make anyone sick, certain people are at great risk of flu-associated complications. Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, chills, and fatigue. A person may also have vomiting and diarrhea.

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About Halifax Regional

Halifax Regional Medical Center is licensed for 204 beds, including psychiatric and nursery. A non-profit organization, Halifax Regional is fully accredited by the Joint Commission. For more information, visit www.halifaxregional.org.