



Media Information:

For immediate release:

Nov. 2, 2022

Flu, RSV, COVID-19 circulating in Yellowstone County

Billings, MT – Respiratory illnesses are increasing in Yellowstone County with at least one local flu patient hospitalized in October and an average of a dozen COVID-19 patients hospitalized in Billings every day in last week. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is going around, resulting in a few hospitalizations of children.

The percentage of local hospital emergency department visits for symptoms of respiratory illness (such as cough and trouble breathing) has ticked up in the past three weeks, although that percentage is lower than this time in 2020 and 2021.

RiverStone Health has received confirmation that four more Yellowstone County residents died from COVID-19 illness, bringing the county's pandemic death toll to 591 people since March 2020.

Vaccines offer the safest scientifically proven protection against serious illness and death from flu and from COVID-19. Vaccines against flu and COVID-19 viruses are recommended for children as young as six months and everyone older. Both types of vaccines can be received at the same visit with your healthcare provider.

RiverStone Health Immunization Clinic provides vaccines for children and adults by appointment. COVID-19 vaccines remain available at no cost and RiverStone Health will work with individuals to make flu vaccine affordable. Please call 406.247.3382. Vaccines also are available at many other local clinics and pharmacies.

Along with vaccination, good hygiene practices reduce your risk of being infected with and spreading respiratory viruses. That means frequent, thorough handwashing, covering your cough and sneeze and staying home when ill. People who are at high risk for serious respiratory illness may consider additional precautions, such as wearing a facemask in public and avoiding crowds.

As of Wednesday, the latest Yellowstone County COVID-19 death reports include:

- A man in his 80s who died on Oct. 30 at a Billings hospital. He had been vaccinated.

- A woman in her 90s who died on Oct. 11 at a care facility. She had been vaccinated.
- A man in his 90s who died on Oct. 10 at home. He had been vaccinated.
- A woman in her 70s who died on Oct. 6 at home. She was not vaccinated.

RiverStone Health previously reported the October COVID-19 related deaths of two other Yellowstone County residents. Altogether, six of our county neighbors succumbed to the pandemic virus during October. There can be delays in the filing of death certificates with the County Clerk and Recorder's Office and confirmation of cause of death, which delays our reporting of cases.

For more information, visit covid.riverstonehealth.org.

###