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Health officials: Man and child who recently died tested positive for influenza

A man and child who recently died tested positive for influenza, though Riverside County health officials are saying the cause of death has not been determined.

The 22-year-old man from Hemet tested positive for Influenza A and died earlier this month after being briefly hospitalized, according to Dr. Cameron Kaiser, interim public health officer for Riverside County. The 4-year-old girl from Perris tested positive for Influenza B and died earlier this month after being taken to a local emergency room, Kaiser said.

Officials do not know how long it will take to determine whether the influenza contributed to the deaths in any way.

Riverside County has seen some recent increases in instances of influenza-like illness in the region, but the overall flu activity is within the normal range.

Officials emphasize there are ways to reduce the chances of catching the flu. Obtaining a influenza vaccination is important and the most effective protection against flu viruses, Kaiser said. Flu vaccine is available through the County Family Care Centers; various pharmacies, and physician offices. There is time to get vaccinated in order to be protected against flu viruses.

Effective hand washing and proper covering of coughs and sneezing also help to prevent the spread of flu. Individuals, who are ill with cough and fever, are encouraged not to go work or school to limit exposure of co-workers and classmates.

Most individuals recover from the flu by getting plenty of rest, drinking plenty of fluids. A health care provider should be contacted for severe illness. It is important to inform the health care facility of symptoms so appropriate precautions can be taken to avoid exposure of other individuals.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended that all persons 6 months of age and older receive a flu vaccination each year.