

A Message from St. Martin's Medicine Cabinet

1.15.26

We hope you ended 2025 well and started 2026 in good health! And we want you to stay that way.

As of mid-January, reports of “influenza-like illness” or ILI – doctor/hospital visits for fever, cough, and sore throat – are the highest in nearly 30 years. It’s a very bad flu season! CDC estimates there have been at least 15,000,000 illnesses, 180,000 hospitalizations, and 7,400 deaths from flu so far. Infections haven’t peaked yet, and Pennsylvania is already in the high ILI category.

What can you do to protect yourself and others?

- Talk to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about a flu shot. Getting vaccinated may not prevent infection, but it has proved to reduce the severity of illness, the likelihood of being hospitalized, and spreading flu to others. Because multiple strains are going around, even if you’ve already had the flu and haven’t been vaccinated, getting a shot can still protect you.
- If you do get sick, prescription antiviral drugs are available. You need to get them early in your illness, so don’t delay calling your doctor. These drugs have proven very effective in reducing severity, hospitalization, and death.
- Other protective measures: wearing a mask in crowded indoor spaces (including church, and masks are available) and keeping your hands clean and away from your face. Hand hygiene is really important right now because norovirus is also going around. Noro is highly contagious, spreads via contaminated surfaces (think doorknobs) and food, and causes severe vomiting and diarrhea. (Note that sanitizer works for respiratory viruses but not noro, so wash, wash, wash!)
- The most important thing you can do for yourself and others is stay home if you’re sick or think you might be.

Stay safe, St. Martin's!