

Script – Print - Cold Virus Not So Common, Yet

Still, precautions should be taken

While an early winter chill across the Midwest has many of us feeling a little blah, the cold virus can't be blamed. Most areas of the country, including Illinois are reporting only sporadic activity.

Though not yet common, doctors still advise all of us to be wary and take the necessary precautions. That includes avoiding crowds and people who are battling colds. Wash your hands correctly and regularly, plus get plenty of rest and drink plenty of fluids. This is especially important for children and the elderly.

As for treatment, Dr. Michael Kouimelis, a family medicine physician with OSF Medical Group says, basically, a cold needs to simply run its course. He says symptoms of the virus should last only a week or so. But he also cautions, with flu season around the corner, it's beneficial to know the differences between the two bugs.

SOT: Dr. Michael Kouimelis, family medicine physician, OSF Medical Group

"The onset of the flu tends to be much more rapid and quick," says Dr. Michael Kouimelis, a family medicine physician with OSF Medical Group, "Whereas the onset of cold tends to kind of gradually come on. Symptoms, such as fever, chills, body aches, headache, are more common with the flu. Less common with a cold, although they can be present. Sometimes, young children will also experience some nausea or vomiting or diarrhea with the flu. You don't see that much with adults. Symptoms, such as, congestion, nasal drainage, you know, kind of, upper respiratory tends to be more common with the cold than it does with the flu." (:41)

Dr. Kouimelis says rarely do colds require a visit to your physician. Flu, however, is a different story, particularly if there are complications.

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"Complications with pneumonia, you know, people that have congestive heart failure or have other heart diseases, lung diseases are more susceptible and more likely to have a worsening of their symptoms," says Dr. Michael Kouimelis, a family medicine physician with OSF Medical Group, (:12)

Dr. Kouimelis says all indications are that this oncoming flu season may not be a bad one. Still, he recommends a flu shot and, though it's early November, it's not too late to get one.