

H3N2 TAKES DURHAM

Durham - Just about everyone knows of someone that has fallen victim to either COVID or influenza. It's more than just a bad cold: influenza can also raise your risk of a heart attack shortly after an infection, medical experts are warning as the H3N2 strain spreads rapidly in Canada. Reports are coming in on a daily basis to local Durham doctors.

People are getting sick at an alarming rate. At the same time, flu season is coinciding with another risk factor for heart attacks – shovelling snow.

It is common knowledge that any time you get an infection, including a viral infection, there's the release in your body of molecules that both trigger inflammation and sustain inflammation. And part of that is an increased tendency for your blood to clot.

That can have immediate effects within the weeks following an infection, resulting in things like strokes or heart attacks.

The risk is also significantly higher following COVID-19 infections. People are three times more likely to have a heart attack and three times as likely to have a stroke in the 14 weeks following COVID-19 infection, with the risk remaining elevated for a year, that data shows.

People are four times as likely to have a heart attack and five times more likely to have a stroke in the month after laboratory-confirmed influenza, data published in the Journal of the American Heart Association in October shows.

With the ongoing fear of vaccinations. People are left at risk of not only the disease but also possible heart attacks.

Doctors argue that common sense should prevail and that vaccinations are the only salvation from both the disease and any heart related problems.

It is wise, If you're sick, then just stay in and see if you can get someone else to shovel the snow for you rather than go out there and try to tough it out. Because you know that's two things that can trigger a heart attack happening at the same time.

You might not want to drink too much alcohol because that can also increase your risk for cardiovascular events. Maybe don't eat too much because sometimes that can be a stressor on your body.

The rate of hospitalization from influenza in Canada has nearly doubled compared with the previous week of available data, with infections now up almost 30 per cent, Health Canada's latest figures show.

For the week ending Dec. 13, Canada saw 11,646 new cases of flu being detected, which means 27.7 per cent of all the tests conducted in the country came out positive.

This was an increase of 71 per cent compared with the week before, which saw 6,799 new cases and a positivity rate of 20.2 per cent.

The flu is also landing more Canadians in the hospital, with hospitalizations at 6.2 people per 100,000 of population — up from 3.9 the week before.

The youngest and oldest Canadians are getting hit the hardest. The highest rate of weekly hospitalizations was in adults aged 65 years and over and children aged four years and younger.

H3N2, a mutated version of the flu, causes symptoms such as fever, body aches, cough, sore throat, headaches, chills, and fatigue.

H3N2 virus symptoms include sudden high fever, intense body aches, sore throat, dry cough, headache, and fatigue. Some may have vomiting or diarrhea, especially.

Which flu is worse, H1N1 or H3N2?

From a clinical perspective, in contrast to pathology, patients with A/H3N2 tend to experience more severe disease than those with A/H1N1 [14]. However, influenza B has a higher incidence of gastrointestinal symptoms and may cause myalgia.

Is H3N2 a bad flu?

It can cause illness ranging from mild to severe, sometimes resulting in hospitalization or death. Seasonal influenza activity has increased globally in recent months, with an increased proportion of seasonal influenza A(H3N2) viruses being detected.

How do you treat H3N2 flu?

H3N2 treatment focuses on rest, hydration, and symptom relief with OTC meds (fever/pain), but antiviral drugs (like Tamiflu/oseltamivir) are crucial for high-risk or severe cases, best started within 48 hours to shorten illness and prevent complications, with antibiotics ineffective against the virus.

Supportive care includes warm fluids, salt water gargles, and good hygiene, while severe cases may require hospitalization.

63 year old Darlene Cooper said, "I had never experienced such feelings. I felt I could not walk. I was fatigued and I had lost control of my legs. I thought it was COVID.

I went to my doctor and he explained that it is a new strain of the flu. He said not to take any chances and stay home."

Fred Cunnins from Whitby, "There I was out for a walk with my dog.

I was not feeling well all morning... the sudden cold hit me hard. As we walked I slipped on some ice. When I got up I could not catch my breath back. I began to sweat and my breathing was out of control. I called 911.

They took me to the hospital and told me I had suffered a mild heart attack and that I was also infected with the flu. I was kept at the hospital for over 2 days for observation. Doctor said, it could have been a lot worst and tole me to just rest."

How to tell if your flu is severe?

Signs in adults:

Having difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.

Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen.

Sudden dizziness.

Confusion.

Severe and/or persistent vomiting.

Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with a fever and a worse cough.

Can I just let the flu run its course?

Young, healthy people probably don't need to be treated for influenza. It will simply run its course in a few days. Over-the-counter medications for symptoms may be helpful. Seniors and those with respiratory illness should take extra precautions.

There are several different flu vaccines that are used in the national vaccination programme and all of them protect against the 3 main flu virus types: influenza A(H1N1), influenza A(H3N2) and influenza B.

Some see it as taking a risk. Others see it for what it is good medicine.

What is this new super flu?

This time, it's because there is a worrisome novel variant — called subclade K — of the decades-old H3N2 subtype of the influenza A virus.

The variant has already fueled nasty outbreaks in the U.K., Japan, Australia, and Canada, and now it's here and spreading across the U.S and Canada.

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