

**BUTTE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
MEDIA RELEASE**

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RELEASED BY: Chief Deputy Coroner Lt. Burdine and
Butte County Public Health Department

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SUBJECT: FLU CAUSE OF CHILD'S DEATH IN BUTTE COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Butte County Coroner's Office, in conjunction with Butte County Public Health Department, is reporting the death of a child due to Influenza A in Butte County.

On December 13, 2003, the Butte County Coroner's Office conducted an investigation into the circumstances, cause, and manner of death of 17-month-old Christina Winter from Oroville. Paramedics transported the small child to Oroville Hospital, where she was pronounced upon arrival. It was learned that the child had been sick for approximately five days, taking cold medicine and liquids. The results of the autopsy performed by forensic pathologist Dr. Thomas Resk revealed the cause of death to be "acute bronchiolitis due to Influenza A virus."

"The death of a child for any reason is a painful tragedy for the parents, family, and community. We are deeply saddened by the death of this child due to flu," states Dr. Mark Lundberg, Health Officer, Butte County Public Health. "Unfortunately, of the over 8,000 annual deaths due to flu in California, about 44 children under the age of four years die from flu or its complications each year."

New shipments of flu vaccine for children and adults have arrived from the State to Butte County Public Health Department. These shipments, plus any remaining supplies of flu shots, are reserved for high-risk individuals. "Since the flu season typically goes through March, high-risk individuals who have not had their flu shot can still benefit from the protection of the flu vaccine. Contact your doctor to see if you qualify as high-risk," said Carmen Ochoa, Public Information Officer.

High-risk individuals are the following:

- Healthy children, aged 6-23 months
- Adults, aged ≥ 65 years
- Pregnant women in their second or third trimester during influenza season
- Persons between the ages of 2 and 64 years with underlying chronic conditions.

While the flu and cold are both respiratory (breathing) system infections caused by viruses and initial symptoms can be similar, the flu can be much more severe and can lead to more serious complications such as pneumonia and sometimes death.

Colds usually begin slowly, with a scratchy sore throat, sneezing, runny nose, coughing and/or chest discomfort. A cold usually lasts two to seven days, but can last up to two weeks.

Flu usually starts with a sudden headache, dry cough, muscle aches, weakness, fatigue, a fever up to 104 degrees, and/or chest discomfort. Some people may also get a runny nose and sore throat. Most people feel better in a couple of days but may have a cough and feel tired for two weeks or longer. (For a comparison of the flu, cold, and gastrointestinal symptoms, see the attached chart.)

The following prevention tips will reduce the possibility of getting the flu:

- Do not share food, eating utensils, drink containers, or other personal items.
- Wash your hands often with plenty of soap and water and avoid touching your nose, eyes, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stand three-to-four feet from others who are sneezing and coughing.
- Use waterless hand-hygiene product when soap and water are not available.
- Minimize being in places with a lot of people who are coughing and sneezing during the flu season.
- Eat nutritious foods, especially fresh fruits such as citrus fruits.
- Drink plenty of fluids.

If you already have the flu:

- Stay home from work, school, or events if you have flu-like symptoms. Get plenty of rest.
- Use tissue to cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, or cough into your upper sleeve.
- Wash hands often by rubbing vigorously with soap and water or if soap and water are not available, use a waterless hand-hygiene product.
- If symptoms become severe or if you are at high risk for complications, call your health care provider.

Dr. Lundberg states, “Aspirin and aspirin-containing products should not be given to children and adolescents who have the flu.” Aspirin is sometimes referred to as salicylates and is a common ingredient in many cold medications. Taking aspirin while sick with the flu has been associated with the development of Reyes Syndrome, which can lead to coma, brain damage, and even death in children and teenagers suffering from the flu, flu-like illnesses, or chicken pox.

For further flu information in English, Spanish, and Hmong, call the Butte County Public Health Department at 1-800-339-2941.

For further information on-line, including a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the flu, go to:

1. The Butte County Public Health Department website at www.buttecountypublichealth.org and click on the “Hot Topics” button.
2. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/flu/fluvirus.htm
3. World Health Organization (WHO) website at: www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/pandemic/en

Flu, Cold, or “Stomach Bug” symptoms? How can you tell?

Symptoms	Influenza	Cold	Gastrointestinal Illness (“Stomach Bug”)
Fever	Characteristic high (100.4 - 104°F) sudden onset, lasts 3-to-4 days	Usually Mild	Uncommon and usually mild
Headache	Prominent	Rare	Rare
General Aches & Pains	Usual; often quite severe	Slight	Rare
Fatigue & Weakness	Extreme; can last up to a month	Mild	Mild
Bedridden	Early & prominent; can last several days	Never	Common; can last for one or two days
Runny, Stuffy Nose	Sometimes	Common	Uncommon
Sneezing	Sometimes	Common	Uncommon
Sore Throat	Sometimes	Common	Uncommon
Chest Discomfort, Cough	Common; can become severe	Mild to moderate; hacking cough	None
Vomiting	Not Usually/ Rare	Not Usually/Rare	Common
Diarrhea	Not Usually/Rare	Not Usually/Rare	Common
Complications	Bronchitis, pneumonia; can be life threatening	Sinus congestion or earache	Can develop dehydration if there is too much vomiting and diarrhea

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