



The flu is not the only illness spreading this cold season

By Stephanie Bennett | Posted: Fri 11:03 PM, Feb 10, 2017 | Updated: Fri 11:16 PM, Feb 10, 2017



PERMIAN BASIN -- Although it was unseasonable **warm** today, it is still winter.

And that means cold and flu season is still upon us.

But Influenza isn't the only illness plaguing the Permian Basin.

Another ailment is going around that you may not know about.

Flu season is a topic that emergency physician Dr. Sudip Bose knows all too well.

But while many of his patients have respiratory and flu-like symptoms, that doesn't mean they have the flu.

"Last Saturday and Sunday and part of Monday I was sick myself. My son has been sick for almost two weeks," said one Odessa resident.

How do you know when it's time to visit the doctor?

“Our goal here is to figure out which ones are the ones that are more serious,” Bose said.

But the good news is – “Most of these illnesses don't necessarily need to go to the emergency room.”

Usually a visit to urgent care and primary doctors will do.

“A lot of times it's what our grandmothers told us, just sleep and have some soup and rest and get fluids and that's the best treatment,” Bose added.

But it can be a different and darker story for infants and toddlers.

“My little niece, she's had RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) twice already in this year. It's really fast for them to get sick, like she was healthy again, and just being out there in the public again she got sick,” said an Odessa woman.

RSV can actually kill babies.

“RSV affects the infants more aggressively because it goes deeper into the lungs,” Bose said. But it can easily be confused with a common cold.

“They're all different entities. We have to distinguish between those,” Bose added.

For instance, antibiotics don't work on viruses, including RSV.

Most of the time you can help your baby fight off the virus by simply managing symptoms.

“Just look at your child. Anything that needs to go to the emergency room you probably won't miss,” Bose said.

Most importantly, don't overreact and panic; just listen to your body.

Rest, sleep, and hydration will work wonders and most of the time you and your baby can shake off that bug.

Here's how you know if your child's RSV is severe enough for a trip to the emergency room:

If your child turns blue or stops breathing for ten to 20 seconds at a time, is breathing rapidly, flares their nostrils in an effort to breathe better, and have retractions on their ribs.

As for the flu, the best time to get a flu shot is around October when flu season begins.

If you get a shot now, it won't help you for very long.

Healthy people are still urged to get that shot – if you do catch the flu, it will be less severe.

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