Local urgent care besieged by flu cases
By John T. Miller

This graph from the CDC represents the effectiveness of seasonal flu vaccines from the 2004-05 season through 2016-17. The numbers presented for the 2015-16 season were CDC estimates from Nov. 2, 2015 through April 15, 2016, while the numbers presented for the 2016-17 season are from a draft of a manuscript in progress. Interim early estimates for 2017-18 may differ from final and of season estimates. Shaded provinces presented for areas with the most flu cases.

In this particularly drastic flu season, even the state’s local urgent care center isn’t immune to the uncontrollable virus. When another doctor at Siat Med called in sick via text message at 3 a.m. on Saturday, Dr. Armando Samaniego had to scramble for coverage at his Lafayette practice. Samaniego, a Lafayette resident and founder of Siat Med, says, “the incidence and prevalence of the flu has been much higher this year. We are seeing at least three to six positive readings at each of our clinics for the day for the flu.” He cites two main reasons for the increase in cases. “This particular flu is much more aggressive, and the vaccine may not be as effective as last year.”

Even though the vaccine does not totally ensure that you won’t catch the flu (see graph), a 2011 study published in the journal Clinical Infectious Diseases did found that people who got the flu shot were moderately to highly unlikely to visit the hospital for flu symptoms as those who did not get the vaccine. Yet, the cities cited finding that symptoms are far less severe for people who have the shot and yet still contract the disease.

The weather contributes to the spread of the flu. “People think why the flu season corresponds to winter. When it is cold outside, people tend to gather indoors and huddle in the same rooms, incurring the chances to transmit the germs,” said Samaniego. “Once the weather warms up and people can go outside, the chance for it to be reduced.”

Another factor causing the rapid transmission of the flu is the incubation period. After coming in contact with someone suffering from the infection, a person is already contagious to others.

After the medication period, flu symptoms may appear as a fever, or chills, cough, sore throat, dry or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headache, fatigue, and some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though that is more common in children. Effective
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