



---

## PRESS RELEASE

### Contact

J.R. Labbe

817-702-1365

[ilabbe@jpshealth.org](mailto:ilabbe@jpshealth.org)

## Flu cases mount Tarrant County patients of all ages affected

Jan. 4, 2018 — Positive flu tests for January jumped from 51 to 76 on Thursday at John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth, overtaking in just four days the cumulative total for all of November.

Lab test results suggest the flu is affecting Tarrant County residents of all ages. Patients tested in the emergency room or elsewhere in the hospital since the end of December range in age from 15 months to 84 years old. They include two patients younger than 2 and 10 people older than 65, who are at increased risk of severe flu complications such as pneumonia. Sixteen flu patients were hospitalized on Thursday.

Since the beginning of August, 647 people have tested positive for the flu at the hospital, including 73 in November and 408 in December. Those figures do not include patients from JPS Health Network's outpatient clinics across Tarrant County.

Demand for the flu medication Tamiflu remains high, but rumors of a national shortage of the drug were just that – rumors, according to Chief Pharmacy Officer Nicole Shoquist. JPS ran short of Tamiflu last weekend, necessitating an emergency shipment from a drug wholesaler, but that was a temporary situation caused by December's abrupt increase in flu across North Texas. "There is no shortage of Tamiflu," Shoquist said. If taken soon after symptoms first appear, the drug can shorten the duration of the flu. People who take it are less likely to spread the virus to others and less likely to experience complications.

Flu vaccine is also readily available, and JPS urges everyone to get a flu shot. The vaccine remains the best protection, along with basic (but often neglected) preventive measures such as frequent hand-washing, covering coughs and sneezes and keeping hands away from your face.

Flu shots are available at JPS Medical Home clinics during scheduled appointments or designated walk-in hours. For those paying out-of-pocket, the cost is \$25. A list of clinics providing flu shots is attached.