

IMPulse

Intermountain Media Pulse

A TRUETONE INCORPORATED COMPANY

**news
CLIP**

11623 Lake Shore
Nampa, ID 83686
(208) 880-9814

FOR YOUR INFORMATION
The Idaho Statesman
Boise, Idaho
Friday, January 26, 2018
Michael Katz
Page 1 of 3

Idaho's flu season might be the deadliest in 12 years. The vaccine might be weak, too.

Marvin Kissée, who was one week shy of 96, was as healthy as could be.

Kissée and his wife, Mildred, recently moved back to Idaho to be closer to family after living in North Dakota for several decades. The Kissées met as students at Northwest Nazarene University and were married for 73 years.

Kissée served in World War II and the Korean War and later became a school teacher.

"Opa" was kind, quiet and still sharp as a tack, according to his granddaughter Anita Kissée, who serves as the spokeswoman at St. Luke's.

"Everyone in my family lives to be in their 90s," she said with a laugh.

But over the last few weeks, Marvin and Mildred came down with bouts of the flu -- despite getting their flu shots. Mildred was hospitalized twice with dehydration and was released both times. Marvin's symptoms began acting up early last week. Within a few days, it became apparent he was not OK.

On Sunday, his family was forced to say goodbye. Marvin is one of 46 people who have died in Idaho during this flu season.

"It came so quickly. They believe it turned into pneumonia ... then it quickly spread to all his organs," Kissée said. "At 96, there's not a lot you can do to fight."

Consumer Reports has referred to this year's flu season as "severe." The Washington Post reports 12,000 have been hospitalized and has called the season "fierce" and potentially the deadliest in 15 years. With at least 37 children already dead from the flu across the country according to The Washington Post, the reality of a bad flu season is impossible to ignore.

"When I walked into the ER and saw that it was my grandpa and even my grandma ... it was really my first experience knowing how serious it is," Kissée said. "(You think) 'I can't believe this is happening to my family.'"

IMG_5819Mildred Kissée holds the hand of her husband, Marvin, in the hospital. Marvin Kissée, a veteran of two wars, died from complications from the flu Sunday.

Why this year?

There were 72 flu-related deaths in Idaho last season -- the most in the last 12 years, according to Randi Pedersen, who serves as the flu surveillance coordinator at the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. The seasonal average is 23 deaths, Pedersen said.

IMPulse

Intermountain Media Pulse

A TRUETONE INCORPORATED COMPANY

**news
CLIP**

11623 Lake Shore
Nampa, ID 83686
(208) 880-9814

FOR YOUR INFORMATION
The Idaho Statesman
Boise, Idaho
Friday, January 26, 2018
Michael Katz
Page 2 of 3

At this point a year ago, there had been 18 fatalities in Idaho.

Schools across Idaho have been forced to close their doors throughout the season as well. The Kellogg School District shut down each of its five schools earlier in January because of a flu outbreak, the Associated Press reported. Schools in Cascade also closed their doors Thursday and Friday of this week.

The bad flu season is a national trend.

Hospitals in Missouri have been forced to send ambulances elsewhere because of overcrowding, the Kansas City Star reports. According to Primary Health Medical Group, half of all county hospitals in Alabama are currently near, at or over capacity. The Los Angeles Times reported that 32 people under the age of 65 died in a single week alone in California.

Flu season normally runs from October through April in Idaho, and Pedersen said Idaho saw its first flu-related fatality in late September.

"We started seeing flu-related deaths earlier this year," said Pedersen. "That made us concerned."

The severity of the flu in a year depends on the specific strain, as each is a different virus.

This year's strain is known as A(H3N2); it is similar to the strain from a year ago, Pedersen said.

"H3N2 is historically the bad actor among influenzas," and is "also associated with complications," said Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institutes of Health National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, in an interview with National Geographic.

Those particularly at risk to develop complications from the flu are children 5 or younger (particularly those under 2-years-old), adults 65-and-over, pregnant women and those in nursing home/long-term care facilities, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

IMG_5818Marvin and Mildred Kissée

What about the vaccine?

Helping alleviate things to an extent is, of course, the flu vaccine. While the statistics on the effectiveness won't be fully released until sometime in February, Pedersen said all indications are that this year's vaccine is a good match for the specific strain seen in Idaho.

The vaccine, however, is not perfect. At its best, the vaccine is generally just 40-50 percent effective, though it will help lessen symptoms, Pedersen said. The flu shot helps guard against three or four different strains.

National Geographic reported this year's vaccine could be just 30 percent effective, however, and was just 10 percent effective in Australia. Fauci said the reason for the lack of effectiveness in this year's batch is because the virus further mutated while the vaccine was being made.

"Getting your flu shot is kind of like how we use a seat belt ... when you wear a seatbelt, it lessens the chance you'll die in a car crash by 50 percent," she said. "The same thing is kind of true from the flu."

IMPulse

Intermountain Media Pulse

A TRUETONE INCORPORATED COMPANY

**news
CLIP**

11623 Lake Shore
Nampa, ID 83686
(208) 880-9814

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The Idaho Statesman

Boise, Idaho

Friday, January 26, 2018

Michael Katz

Page 3 of 3

Though there is no assurance that the vaccine will prove effective on someone, it certainly helps the odds of not contracting the flu, as it may have for Mildred.

"It's scary to think that something like the flu can be so deadly," Kissée said. "It's just not a chance I want to take ... I've seen it."

Kissée also pointed out that getting a flu shot isn't necessarily just for the person who gets it; it is for the people around them as well. Awareness and precaution are important.

"Be a little more diligent and vigilant when trying to protect our loved ones. We have a responsibility of recognizing when we don't feel good," Kissée said. "You just never know who around you has a compromised immune system."

What can you do?

Besides getting the flu vaccine, everyday actions to stop the spread of influenza include:

- * Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing to prevent infecting other people.
- Avoid people who appear to be sick.
- * Stay home from work or school when you're sick so you don't infect others.
 - * Wash your hands frequently, especially after being in public. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth until you have washed your hands.
 - * Get plenty of rest, drink plenty of liquids, eat nutritious foods and take part in physical activity to stay healthy.

Every year, influenza contributes to an estimated 36,000 deaths in the United States, along with more than 200,000 hospitalizations.

###

Copyright 2018 The Idaho Statesman