

## **Influenza**

### **Influenza Symptoms, Protection, and What to Do If You Get Sick**

Influenza (commonly called the “flu”) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. The information below describes common flu symptoms, how to protect yourself and those close to you from getting the flu, and what to do if you get sick with flu-like symptoms. Flu symptoms can last for up to a couple of weeks (especially the cough) but generally people feel most ill at the beginning of the illness.

#### **Be Aware of Common Flu Symptoms**

Influenza usually starts suddenly and may include the following symptoms:

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Tiredness (can be extreme)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Diarrhea and vomiting (more common among children than adults)

#### **Rest, Fluids, and Over-the-Counter Medications**

If you get the flu, there are some actions you can take at home:

- Rest
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid using alcohol and tobacco
- Take medication to relieve the symptoms of flu

#### **Know How the Flu Spreads**

The flu usually spreads from person to person in respiratory droplets when people who are infected cough or sneeze. People occasionally may become infected by touching something with

influenza virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes. Healthy adults may be able to infect others **1 day before** getting symptoms and up to **5 days after** getting sick. Therefore, it is possible to give someone the flu before you know you are sick as well as while you are sick.

## **Habits for Good Health**

These steps may help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses such as the flu:

- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze—throw the tissue away after

you use it.

- **Wash your hands often with soap and water**, especially after you cough or sneeze. If you are not near water, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.

- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

- **If you get the flu, stay home from work, school, and social gatherings.** In this way you will help prevent others from catching your illness.

- **Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs often spread this way.

Prevention

Receive a yearly flu shot.

Information above is from the CDC.