**Influenza**

**WHAT IS IT?**

Influenza, or the flu, is a virus that infects the respiratory system, including your nose, throat and lungs. This is different from “the stomach flu” that causes nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

**WHAT CAUSES IT?**

The influenza virus spreads in the form of droplets in the air when someone who is infected coughs or sneezes. You can inhale the virus directly or touch a surface that is infected and transfer it to your face or mouth. People are contagious one day before symptoms develop and for 5-7 days after.

**PREVENTION TIPS**

- Get a yearly flu shot!
- Avoid close contact with those who are sick.
- Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly.
- Don’t share utensils that might spread germs.
- Eat healthy meals and get plenty of sleep.

**SYMPTOMS**

- Sudden onset
- Fever greater than 100.4 degrees F
- Extreme fatigue
- Generalized muscle aches
- Chills
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion or runny nose

**WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL CARE:**

- Fever > 103 not responding to medication.
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

**SELF CARE**

- Stay home or in your dorm room for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care. Have a friend get your meals for you.
- If you need to be in a common area or around people, maintain a distance of 6 feet from people.
- Drink plenty of fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks) to keep from becoming dehydrated.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Do not share utensils, water bottles, etc.
- Take medications for symptom relief as needed for fever and pain such as Tylenol (acetaminophen) and/or ibuprofen and cough medicine. **CAUTION: Always follow package instructions.**
- REST