

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