

# INFLUENZA

## What is Influenza?

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

## What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Vomiting and diarrhea

## How is it treated?

Antiviral medications, such as Tamiflu, may be prescribed to shorten the length of time you are sick. These medications do not cure the flu. They are most effective when started within 1 to 2 days of the first symptoms.

There are also medications that are available with and without a prescription to treat symptoms associated with influenza. Common medications include:

- Antihistamines-dries secretions in the nose
- Decongestants-decreases congestion and pressure
- Cough suppressants-decreases cough
- Expectorants-thins mucus secretions

- Tylenol and/or Ibuprofen-reduces fever and pain

It is important to stay home from work or school to rest and drink lots of fluids.

### **How long does Influenza last?**

Influenza can last from 5 to 7 days. Although most people with the flu are most contagious in the first 3-4 days after the illness begins, some otherwise healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5-7 days after becoming sick.

### **Who can get Influenza?**

Anyone can get influenza. Some people are at high risk of developing serious flu related complications. This includes people 65 years of age and older, people of any age with chronic medical conditions, pregnant women and young children.

### **How is Influenza prevented?**

The most important step in preventing the flu is to get the flu vaccination every year. Additionally, the CDC recommends the following:

- Frequent hand-washing
- Stay at home when you are sick
- Cover you mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick



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