

Influenza(Flu)

Influenza is a contagious viral infection that affects the respiratory system. The areas included are the nose, throat, and lungs. There are typically two types each year, Flu A and Flu B. Each type have different strains and those strains change from year to year.

Frequent Signs & Symptoms

Symptoms can vary from person to person. They can also vary depending on which strain a person is infected with.

Symptoms may include:

- Fatigue, weakness, and body aches
- Fever (typically 100.4 or higher)
- Chills and sweating
- Sore throat; dry, persistent cough
- Headache
- Nasal congestion and/or runny nose

Causes

The flu virus spreads in droplets that pass through the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. You can become infected by breathing in germs from the air or touching a contaminated surface then touching your face. A person typically has symptoms within 1-5 days of exposure. A person is likely contagious the day before symptoms start and 5-7 days after symptoms started.

Prevention

Yearly flu vaccines are recommended. Other tips for avoiding infection include:

- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use alcohol based hand sanitizer when hand washing is unavailable.
- Regularly clean frequently touched surfaces with sanitizing cleaner.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis requires an examination by your health care provider. Often a flu diagnosis can be made solely on signs and symptoms but often flu testing is performed to verify the flu type and for reporting purposes.

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Treatment

There is no specific treatment plan to treat the flu. Each patient differs depending on their symptoms and the severity of their symptoms.

Your health care provider may prescribe an antiviral medication to help shorten your illness and help reduce the severity of the symptoms.

Antibiotics are NOT prescribed to treat a viral infection such as the flu.

Over-the-Counter medications such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen can be used to ease pain and fever.

Frequent warm salt water gargles (1/2 teaspoon salt in 1 cup water) can help to relieve sore throat.

Also over-the-counter throat lozenges and sprays may help reduce throat pain.

Activity

Most often, getting plenty of rest and increasing fluids is all that is needed to treat the flu. Avoid spreading germs. Avoid contact with others. Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough. Wash hands and use hand sanitizer frequently. Avoid smoking and vaping. Wait 24 hours after symptoms have subsided or 7 days since symptoms began to return to work or school.

Diet

Liquids are most important. Even if you do not feel like eating you need to push fluids. Water, juices, Gatorade, Pedialyte, or soup broth is best.

***Pneumonia is a serious complication of the flu. If symptoms worsen or do not improve, return to the clinic.**

If you have worsening of symptoms when the Health and Wellness Center is unavailable, please follow up with the local ER or Urgent Care.

Additional Information: _____

