



## Information on Influenza

The “flu”, also called Influenza, is a very contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus. It starts around November and is usually seen up through March. It can be mild in nature or very severe, requiring hospitalization. It is different from a cold in that it usually comes on suddenly. Common symptoms of the flu are as follows:

- \*Fever or feeling feverish with chills—not everyone will have a fever
- \*Cough
- \*Sore throat
- \*Runny or stuffy nose
- \*Muscle and body aches
- \*Fatigue (tiredness)
- \*Headache
- \*Children may have vomiting or diarrhea, not common in adults.

Usually when a person gets the flu they can recover in a few days up until 2 weeks. However, pneumonia is a complication of the flu and can be life-threatening. Other complications from getting the flu are bronchitis, sinus infections, and ear infections. The flu can also make certain health conditions worse. For example, adults and children who have asthma will most likely have more asthma attacks because of having the flu.

Flu is spread to others up to 6 feet away by droplets when a person sneezes, coughs or talk. Another way the virus spreads, though not as common, is through touching surfaces with the flu virus and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes. Washing hands or using alcohol-based hand rub is the single best method for preventing spread of the flu.

Those at higher risk for getting the flu are the elderly, people who have chronic medical conditions, pregnant women, and young children. Influenza is unpredictable, it varies from person-to-person and one season to another. Vaccination is one of the best ways to avoid the illness.

If you or your child gets the flu please stay home until the fever is gone without the use of medicine for at least 24 hours. Limit contact with others and wash your hands often.

Please see [http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/family/a\\_flu\\_guide\\_for\\_parents.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/family/a_flu_guide_for_parents.pdf) for further information for parents and having a child with influenza.