



Influenza



Influenza is a contagious disease caused by the influenza virus and is spread via coughing, sneezing, or respiratory secretions.

The best way to prevent influenza (flu) is by getting the influenza immunization.

SYMPTOMS MAY INCLUDE:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Headache
- Chills
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue

SELF-CARE FOR FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS

If you experience flu-like symptoms, it is important that you take care of yourself and limit your exposure to others. The following measures will assist with control of your symptoms.

General Self-Care Measures

- Stay in your room and do not attend classes if you have a fever
- Rest and increase your intake of clear fluids (water, broth, sports drinks, tea)
- If you smoke, stop smoking while ill
- Increase humidity in your living space (vaporizer/humidifier)
- Breathe in steam (hot shower, not a sauna)

Sore Throat Care

- Gargle with warm salt water several times a day for sore throat discomfort (1/4 teaspoon regular salt to 1/2 cup warm water)
- Sip warm chicken broth
- Try warm tea with honey and lemon, apple juice, gelatin, or sucking on flavored ice
- Take frequent small sips if it is painful to swallow
- Use cough drops, hard candy, or frozen popsicles for additional relief

Care for Fever/Headache/Muscle Aches

(Chills and sweats often indicate a fever.)

Consider taking Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Motrin IB®) 2 tablets every 4-6 hours per package directions. These analgesics will help to lower a fever and reduce headaches and body aches. For a fever > 101 degrees Fahrenheit, consider alternating your Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen, 2 tablets of each, no sooner than every 4 hours. Children and adolescents should avoid aspirin when they have the flu because it can cause Reye's syndrome, a rare, but serious condition,

Cough care

Consider taking an expectorant such as Guaifenesin (Robitussin®, Mucinex®) per package directions if you have a cough. This, along with steam treatments/humidity will help liquefy secretions so your body can cough up the phlegm. Cough drops can also help with symptom relief.

Prevent the Spread of Flu

- Avoid close contact with others who may be sick or if you are sick
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or cough into your elbow
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Don't share toothbrushes, eating utensils, towels, drinking glasses or other items that might spread germs
- Take care of yourself by eating healthy meals and getting enough sleep

ANTIVIRAL MEDICATION TREATMENT

Treatment with antiviral medications is not routinely necessary for otherwise healthy people. Prescription antiviral medications, such as Tamiflu®, are generally only required if a patient is at high risk of medical complications if he/she becomes ill with the flu.

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) currently recommends treatment with antiviral medications for:

- Children younger than 2 years old
- Adults 65 years and older
- Pregnant women and women up to 2 weeks from end of pregnancy
- People with certain chronic medical conditions such as asthma or diabetes
- People younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy



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Contact Health Services at (603) 862-2856 when Health Services is open or (603) 862-1530 to talk with a triage nurse at Wentworth-Douglas Hospital when Health Services is closed:

- For a temperature of 101 or greater lasting longer than 4 days
- Any symptoms lasting > 5-7 days
- If you are experiencing a severe headache, rash or stiff neck
- Anytime you are concerned about your symptoms
- If you have questions

*****You should seek immediate medical care if you have any of the following:**

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- **Recurring** dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms that improve, but then return with fever or worsening cough

****IMPORTANT****

Many multi-symptom medications such as Nyquil[®], Dayquil[®], Tylenol Cold[®], and others contain several medications, including acetaminophen (Tylenol[®]) or ibuprofen (Advil[®], Motrin[®]), decongestants, and antihistamines. It is very important that you read the contents label to avoid overdosing yourself by using duplicate ingredients.

You should always "read the directions" on all non-prescription medications, including those listed here, to ensure:

- correct dosing
- awareness of any warnings related to the non-prescription medication
- possible interactions with the medications you take on a daily basis
- possible interactions with any health conditions you may have.

Remember, the flu is caused by a virus and cannot be treated with antibiotics.

Contact a Health Services Triage Nurse at (603) 862-2856

If Health Services is closed, speak to a Triage Nurse at Wentworth-Douglass Hospital by calling (603) 862-1530



HEALTH SERVICES

(603)862-2856 (during hours of operation) ■ (603) 862-1530 (after hours)

www.unh.edu/health-services

