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
- Nasal/Sinus Congestion
- 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 live in the dorm, your RA can assist with getting foods and liquids from the Dining Halls.
- Contact your professors to let them know you are ill.
- If you smoke, stop smoking while ill.

**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.
- The following will help to lower a fever and reduce headaches and body aches:
  - Consider taking Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) 2 tablets every 4-6 hours per package directions, not to exceed 3,000 mg in 24 hours or Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Motrin IB®) 2 tablets every 4-6 hours per package directions.
  - 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.

**Nasal/Sinus Congestion Care:**
- Consider taking a nasal/sinus decongestion per package directions such as Pseudoephedrine, (Sudafed®, Nexafed®) (This can only be purchased at a pharmacy counter)
- Increase the humidity of your living space with a vaporizer or humidifier
- Breathe in steam (hot shower)
- Saline nasal spray (Ocean®, Deep Sea®, etc.) to moisturize nasal passages.
- Nasal/sinus irrigation (Sinus Rinse®, NetiPot®); these relieve sinus and nasal congestion and promote drainage.

**Cough Care**
- Consider taking an expectorant such as Guaifenesin (Robitussin®, Mucinex®) per package directions.
- Increase the humidity of your living space with a vaporizer or humidifier
- Breathe in steam (hot shower) The humidity will help liquefy secretions so your body can cough up the phlegm.
- Cough drops can also help with symptom relief.

**IMPORTANT**

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.
Contact Health & Wellness at (603) 862-2856 when Health & Wellness is open or (603) 862-9355 when Health & Wellness 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

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

**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.

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

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

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

For After Hours Care please call (603) 862-9355

Health & Wellness

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