

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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