

Influenza

Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness. This virus is often transmitted quickly through contact with infected mucus or saliva or by airborne droplets of saliva or mucus.

Symptoms commonly associated with influenza are:

- High fever (>101⁰F)
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Chills
- Nausea and vomiting (in some cases)

Because of the highly infectious nature of an influenza virus, public health officials have made the following recommendations to stay healthy:

- Cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Throw tissues away after using them.
- Wash hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth. This is the most common way viruses are spread.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, stay home and limit interaction with others.

Most people who become sick with influenza will be able to care for themselves at home and will experience complete recovery and health care practitioners may prescribe antiviral medications. The following self-care measures may be helpful in controlling influenza symptoms:

- Take all of your prescribed medications as directed
- Tylenol (acetaminophen) or Advil (ibuprofen) at label-recommended doses.
- Over the counter cold and flu preparations.
- Rest - Sleep helps the body fight infection.

- Drink plenty of fluids - Choose water, Gatorade, juices or warm soups to stay hydrated.
- Keep away from others as much as possible, to prevent spreading the flu and getting others sick
- Dishes can be washed in the dishwasher or with hot soapy water.
- Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by the sick person in the trash. Wash your hands after touching used tissues and similar waste.
- Have everyone in the household wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing.

If symptoms worsen, persist longer than 7 days, or there is an underlying medical condition like asthma or diabetes, schedule an appointment at Millersville University Health Services.

Web links for more information:

- Web MD: <http://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/tc/influenza-topic-overview>
- Family Doctor: <http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/common/infections/cold-flu/073.html>
- Centers of Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

If you are a registered Millersville University student and you have questions or you need to make an appointment, please call Millersville University Health Services at 872-3250.



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