

# The Flu

The flu, also known as influenza, is caused by a virus. Most people will catch the flu through contact with others who are infected. The flu shot is a great way to protect you from the flu. Flu shots are extremely important for high risk people who include; women who are over three months pregnant, young children and people over the age of 65.

## Know the symptoms

Flu symptoms usually begin fast and will appear between 1-7 days after coming in contact with the virus. The flu is very easy to spread and often strikes a full community at one time. The first symptom of the flu is a fever between 102 and 106°F. Other common symptoms may include:

- Chills
- Body aches
- Dizziness
- Flushed Face
- Headache
- Nausea and vomiting

Between day 2 and 4 of the flu, the fever and aches might begin to go away. New symptoms may begin to occur and usually will go away between 4 – 7 days. These symptoms may include:

- Dry cough
- Increased breathing symptoms
- Runny nose
- Sneezing
- Sore throat

## How to treat symptoms

There isn't a prescription available to cure the flu. You can take Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen to help lower the fever and relieve overall achiness. Cough drops are a good way to sooth a sore throat. Drinking plenty of fluids is also important. This will help thin the mucus. Hot drinks like teas will sooth any coughing and help open your airways.

There are antiviral prescriptions that may help treat the illness. Visit your doctor immediately when symptoms first appear. Many of the prescriptions available will only work within 48 hours of flu symptoms.

### How the flu spreads:

The flu virus typically spreads by person to person contact. This contact may include; coughing, sneezing, or talking to someone infected with the virus. The Flu virus can also spread through touching something with the virus on it. There are many different preventive actions that you can take to reduce and eliminate the spread of germs and the flu virus. These actions can include:

- Cover your nose with a tissue when you sneeze and wash your hands immediately after.
- Cough into your sleeve and not your hands. This will help prevent germs from spreading onto your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. In between washing use hand sanitizer if available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.
- Try to avoid coming in contact with someone who has the flu.
- If you have the flu, try to stay home or avoid coming in contact with people until your fever is gone.
- Try to clean frequently touched objects and surfaces including; doorknobs, computer keyboards, cell phones, and any other area where germs can spread.
- If someone is sick in your family try to use throwaway items such as; paper plates, paper towels, and paper cups.
- Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizer if possible.