

Influenza or Respiratory Flu

What is influenza or what is commonly called “the flu”?

Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by viruses that infect the respiratory tract: nose, throat and lungs. Symptoms can be mild to severe.

Signs and symptoms of the flu:

The following symptoms may be experienced by persons infected with these viruses.

Fever/chills

Cough

Sore throat

Runny/stuffy nose

Body aches

Headaches

Fatigue

Some individuals may experience vomiting and diarrhea, this is more common in children.

How is the flu spread?

Most often, these viruses are spread via droplets made when an infected individual coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets may land in the mouths or noses of other people. It is also possible to come in contact with the viruses by touching surfaces or objects that the flu virus is on and then touching your eyes, mouth or nose. Good hand-washing and covering your coughs and sneezes is a good practice to prevent the spread of all diseases.

Incubation period

It is possible to spread these viruses up to one day **before** symptoms develop and 5-7 days **after** becoming ill. **Please keep your child home from school until they have been fever free for 24 hours and can manage good hygiene for cough/runny nose.**

Best prevention- Get Vaccinated!

Two types of vaccines available:

“Flu shots” are inactivated vaccines containing inactivated viruses that are given with a needle.

Nasal-spray vaccine- made with live, weakened viruses that are given via a spray into the nostril. These do not cause people to get the flu.

Flu vaccines are usually available beginning in September or October and continue through the flu season which can last into May.

If your child has a fever of 100 or higher, please keep him/her home until he/she is fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. The same 24 hour guideline applies for a student who has an uncontrolled cough, is vomiting or has diarrhea.