Ottawa County Health Department

INFLUENZA (FLU)

What is influenza (flu)?

Influenza is a disease caused by a virus that primarily affects the nose, throat and lungs. It usually comes on suddenly and can last up to a week or more.

Who can get the flu?

Anyone can get the flu. However, elderly people, anyone with a chronic disease, pregnant women, and children between 6 months and 2 years are at higher risk for complications.

How is the flu spread?

The flu is mainly spread person to person by coughing and sneezing.

What are possible symptoms?

The flu symptoms usually appear within 3 days after exposure:

- fever (usually high)
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle pain
- dry cough
- runny nose
- chills
- sore throat

How is the flu detected?

It is difficult to tell for sure if you have flu based on symptoms alone. Doctors can perform tests to see if you have the flu if you are seen within the first few days or your illness.

How is the flu treated?

The best treatment is to stay at home, rest and drink lots of liquids. Over-the-counter cold medications may also help, but it is best to check with your doctor first, especially before giving any medications to children.

How can the flu be prevented?

- cover your mouth when coughing and sneezing
- avoid contact with infected people
- wash your hands often
- get an annual flu shot

Who should get the flu shot?

- adults and children with chronic disease
- close contacts of high-risk or chronically ill people
- persons age 50 years and older
- children age 6 – 23 months
- close contacts of children age 6 – 23 months
- pregnant women in the 2nd or 3rd trimester during flu season
- healthcare workers

NOTE: People who are over 65 or who have underlying health problems should also get the pneumococcal vaccine.

For more information on influenza contact:

Ottawa County Health Department
www.miOttawa.org

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/flu/
Phone: (888) 246-2675