

Influenza (the flu) is a viral infection of the nose, throat, bronchial tubes and lungs.

## Symptoms

Typical symptoms include:

- fever, chills, weakness, loss of appetite, and aching of the head, back, arms, legs
- sore throat and a dry cough, nausea, and burning eyes
- temperature may rise to 104° F, but after two or three days the fever goes away
- often the person continues to feel tired and sick for several days
- sometimes the person can have complications, such as dehydration or pneumonia

## Transmission

- The flu is spread when a person who has the flu coughs, or sneezes and sends flu virus into the air and other people inhale the virus.
- It may be spread, less often, when a person touches a surface that has flu virus on it, and then touches his or her nose or mouth.

## Prevention

- The easiest way to prevent getting the flu is to WASH YOUR HANDS! The flu is spread by secretions that come from the nose and mouth, like after using Kleenex
- If you get a flu shot, you cannot get the flu from the vaccine, but there are hundreds of other viral infections that the vaccine does not prevent. The Influenza vaccine is recommended for persons at risk because of the possible severe complications that may occur from the disease.

## Treatment

- For uncomplicated flu, a doctor will probably tell you to stay in bed at home as long as the sickness is severe and perhaps for about two days after the fever is gone.
- An antiviral medication is useful for treating someone who has just come down with influenza A. Your doctor decides whether to use the medicine either for prevention or treatment.

## Additional Information

### Who is “high risk”?

People who are described by or have the following are at “high risk”:

- chronic heart or lung disease
- chronic kidney disease
- diabetes
- chronic metabolic disorders
- severe anemia
- diseases or treatments that depress immunity
- residing in a nursing home or other chronic care facility
- age over 65 years

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- physician, nurse, or other provider of care to high-risk persons
- pregnant women who will be in their second or third trimester during the flu season

**HIGH-RISK PEOPLE should have a flu shot every fall because:**

- Influenza viruses usually change each year.
- It takes about 2 weeks after the shot for your body to develop the most protection, then the protection gradually wears off.
- Flu shots are 70 - 90% effective in preventing the flu or at least reducing the symptoms.

**What about reactions to the vaccine?**

- You CANNOT get the flu from the vaccine
- Most people have little or no reaction to the vaccine.
- One in four might have a swollen, red, tender area where the vaccination was given.
- A much smaller number, more children than grownups, might also develop a slight fever within 24 hours and many have chills, headache, or feel a little sick.

**All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.**

Franklin County



Board of Health

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