

FACTS ABOUT INFLUENZA (THE FLU)

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccination each fall.

Every year in the United States, on average, 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications, and about 36,000 people die from the flu (CDC).

The best way to prevent the flu is to get the flu vaccination each fall. Health care workers and first responders should be sure to get the vaccination.

What is Influenza (flu)?

The flu is caused by the influenza virus, which infects the respiratory system (nose, throat, lungs). It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes.

How does the flu spread?

The main way that influenza viruses are spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets and sneezes. Touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching one's mouth can sometimes spread the virus. **The best way to help prevent the spread of the flu is by covering your mouth when you cough and by washing your hands frequently throughout the day.**

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of the flu include: fever (usually high), headache, extreme tiredness, sore throat, body aches and/or muscle aches, runny or stuffy nose, and dry coughs that are more common and intense. Children can have additional gastrointestinal symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea (these are uncommon in adults).

How long is a person with flu virus contagious?

The period when an infected person is contagious depends on the age and health of the person. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others 1 day before symptoms begin and up to 5 days after becoming sick. That means you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Some young children and people with weakened immune systems can be contagious for longer than a week.

What's the difference between a cold and the flu?

Because colds and flu share many symptoms, it can be difficult (or even impossible) to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. Special tests can be carried out, when needed, to tell if a person has the flu. However, in general,

- The flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms such as fever, body aches extreme tiredness, and dry cough are more common and intense.
- Colds are usually milder than the flu. Colds are more likely to cause a runny or stuffy nose. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalization.

What antiviral medications are used for the flu?

Antiviral medications are used along with the flu vaccine to prevent and treat influenza. The single best way to prevent the flu is to **get a flu vaccination each fall.**

Where can I get the flu vaccination?

Wayne County Department of Public Health offers flu vaccinations at the following locations:

Dearborn

6450 Maple
Dearborn, MI 48126
313-216-2201

Taylor

26650 Eureka Road
Taylor, MI 48180
734-955-3900

Wayne

33030 Van Born Road
Wayne, MI 48184
734-727-7100

For more information and updates about the flu, call us at 734-727-7000, or visit the CDC's web site at www.cdc.gov/flu.



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www.waynecounty.com