

MCLA Health Services

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Self Care Sheet

Influenza “flu”

Influenza is a viral infection that attacks your respiratory system (nose, throat and lungs). Flu viruses travel through the air in droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. You can inhale the droplets or pick up the germs from an object such as a phone or computer that an infected person has touched if you then touch your eyes, nose or mouth.

Symptoms of the flu

- ⇒ Similar to the common cold including runny nose, sneezing and sore throat and dry cough, but generally you will feel worse.
- ⇒ Fever of 100.0 F or greater.
- ⇒ More commonly you will have aching muscles (especially the back, arms and legs), chills, sweats, headache, fatigue, headache and weakness. Less frequent symptoms include nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.
- ⇒ Takes 1-2 weeks to totally recover.

How do I know if my symptoms are serious that require more immediate medical attention?

- ⇒ If you have a fever > or equal to 103.0 F.
- ⇒ If you are having trouble breathing, unable to keep fluids down, or are having persistent vomiting.
- ⇒ If you have a chronic disease like asthma, diabetes or heart problems you have an increased risk to develop complications from the flu including pneumonia, bronchitis, ear or sinus infections. High risk people are also pregnant women, people being treated with chemotherapy or certain other medications.

Home Care and Prevention

- ⇒ Living in a dorm can increase your chance of being exposed to the flu. People may be careless about spreading germs but you don't have to catch them.
- ⇒ Get an annual flu vaccine. Now recommended for *everyone* over 6 months of age, unless not recommended by your health care provider or you have an allergy to the vaccine or eggs.
- ⇒ Wash your hands frequently. Vigorous rubbing with soap and water .
- ⇒ Use hand sanitizer and disinfect surfaces such as phones, door knobs and computer keyboards.
- ⇒ Contain your cough and sneeze into your sleeve or tissue, not your hand. Be sure to wash your hands after sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose.
- ⇒ Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose or mouth.
- ⇒ Do not share food, drinks or utensils. Avoid sick people.
- ⇒ Go home if you are sick. Stay isolated in your room, or wear a mask when you leave your room to use the bathroom.
- ⇒ Usually you will need nothing more than plenty of fluids and rest. Getting more sleep helps your immune system fight infection.
- ⇒ You may use over-the-counter pain relievers such as acetaminophen, (Tylenol), naproxen (Aleve) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil). Read the medicine labels carefully. Many medications contain a combination of different medicines. Do not exceed the recommended doses. Do not take more than one medicine containing the same active ingredient (ie acetaminophen is the generic name for Tylenol and can be labeled APAA).
- ⇒ .Boost the immune system by eating healthy foods, consider adding apples, citrus, garlic, grapes, pomegranate, eggplant or a bit of dark bittersweet chocolate.

Follow up at Health Services for further treatment and evaluation especially if you are at high risk for complications, if concern for serious symptoms seek more immediate medical attention.