



Prepare Now for the Flu Season

The change in seasons is always a good time to remind ourselves how important it is to stay healthy and to recognize the signs and symptoms of the flu.

Key Flu Facts:

- The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus. It infects the nose, throat and lungs. In some people it causes mild symptoms, while others experience severe illness.
- The flu spreads through droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. The droplets then land in your mouth or nose and can lead to the flu.
- You can pass the virus to people around you before you even know you are sick and while you are sick. Most healthy adults can infect people a day before they start feeling the symptoms and up to 5-7 days after becoming sick.

Symptoms include:

- Sudden onset of fever (though some people with positive flu swabs occasionally do not have a temp)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Muscle Aches
- Headache
- Fatigue

The flu can lead to other illnesses, such as bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, and sinus infections.

The Flu Vaccine:

Your best protection against the flu is to get vaccinated, in addition to practicing good hand hygiene (wash frequently).

The Flu vaccine protects against three strains of the flu: Influenza A, H1N1, and Influenza B. It takes two weeks from the time you are vaccinated for you to build up antibodies that protect against the flu.

Other Tips to Limit Exposure:

- Avoid close contact with others. Limit greetings like handshakes and hugs during cold weather months to prevent catching and spreading illness.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing. Use tissues instead of handkerchiefs, which can spread illness if not washed immediately.
- Stay home when you are sick. Even if you don't have the flu, your immune system is compromised and more susceptible to illness.