

INFLUENZA

PERSONAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

What is Influenza?

Influenza, commonly called the “flu”, is an acute viral disease of the upper respiratory tract. Persons of any age can get influenza. Most people are ill with influenza for only a few days. However, the elderly and those with chronic illnesses can develop serious complications as a result of influenza and require hospitalization. Influenza also causes thousands of deaths each year, mostly among the elderly.

How is it spread?

Influenza is spread from person to person by direct contact with respiratory droplets through coughing and sneezing. It may also be spread indirectly by articles contaminated with respiratory secretions. The flu virus enters the body through mucous membranes of the eyes, nose or mouth. The incubation period is usually 1-3 days.

How is it treated?

Control of fever with acetaminophen or other antipyretic, adequate rest, and drinking plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration are some measures used to alleviate flu symptoms. Antiviral therapy may be prescribed by a physician for immunocompromised persons or those with chronic conditions that might predispose them to a severe or complicated influenza infection. Children or teen-agers with influenza should not receive salicylates (such as aspirin) because of the resulting risk of developing Reye syndrome.

How is it prevented?

Influenza vaccine can prevent influenza. The vaccine is made from inactivated (killed) influenza viruses each flu season. Since viruses that cause influenza change often, the vaccine is updated each year by replacing at least one of the viruses with a newer one. This is done to make sure the vaccine is as up-to-date as possible. Protection develops 1 to 2 weeks after the injection and may last up to a year. The best time to get influenza vaccine is between September and December. A new shot is needed each year.

SYMPTOMS OF INFLUENZA

- Sudden onset of fever (100-103F in adults and often higher in children)
- Chills
- Sore Throat
- Headache
- Generalized muscle aches
- Dry cough
- Extreme fatigue
- Children may also experience nausea, vomiting and diarrhea along with respiratory symptoms.
- Additional prevention measures include: good handwashing especially after coughing, sneezing and handling tissues.
- Avoid close contact with those who have cold or flu-like symptoms.



DICKINSON-IRON DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

www.didhd.org

**818 Pyle Drive
Kingsford, MI 49802
(906) 774 1868**

**601 Washington Avenue
Iron River, MI 49935
(906) 265 9913**