

Influenza 2012-2013



Just
The
Facts



What is influenza (flu)?

Influenza, what we commonly call the flu, is a contagious respiratory illness. The flu virus affects the lungs, throat, nose and other parts of the body. Unlike the common cold, the flu comes on suddenly.

A person is most contagious during the first 3 days of the illness and symptoms can last for 5 to 10 days.

Flu 101

Although the flu is spread primarily by droplet transmission, the virus can live on objects up to one day on:

Doorknobs, telephones and surfaces

Utensils and food trays

Medical equipment

Some people infected may not develop symptoms, but may be infectious to others. Those that are infected who develop symptoms, can be contagious the day before they get symptoms.

Symptoms of the Flu

- Fever
- Headache
- Extreme tiredness
 - Dry cough
 - Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
 - Muscle aches
- Nausea/Vomiting

Who should get the flu vaccine?

Everyone who is at least 6 months of age and it is especially important for certain people who are at higher risk:

1. People with chronic illnesses such as kidney disease
2. People over the age of 65
3. People who live with or care for others at high risk to develop complications such as family members, caretakers and healthcare providers.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – Recommends

- Get your flu shot as soon as the 2012-2013 flu season vaccine is available- this is **NOW**.
- Flu vaccine is available in primary care doctors offices, clinics, health department, pharmacies and even from your employer.

What sort of flu season is expected for 2012-2013?

- Flu seasons are unpredictable and although they happen every year, the timing, severity and length depends on:
 - what viruses are spreading
 - whether they match the viruses in the vaccine
 - how many people get the vaccine

When does the flu season peak?

The timing of the flu is very unpredictable and can vary from season to season.

The flu season is most common in January or February, but can begin as early as October and continue as late as May.

Preventing the Flu

The single best way to prevent the flu is to

GET THE FLU SHOT!

Patients and staff should be immunized each flu season!

Resources

For more information about the flu go to:

www.cdc.gov/flu

www.aakp.org

<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2447.pdf>