

Information About Influenza (Flu)

- The Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus. The virus infects the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.
- People who have the flu often complain of some or all of these symptoms:
 1. Fever or feeling feverish/chills (Not everyone with the flu will have a fever)
 2. Cough
 3. Sore Throat
 4. Runny Nose
 5. Muscle or Body aches
 6. Headaches
 7. Fatigue
 8. Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.
- The flu spreads mainly by droplets when someone with the flu coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. Less often, the flu can spread by touching objects or surfaces that have come in contact with someone who already has the flu.
- You may be able to pass the flu on before you even know you are sick. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick.
- Certain people are at a greater risk of developing complications from the flu. This includes older people, young children, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease. Complications can include bacterial pneumonia, ear or sinus infections, and dehydration.
- The single best way to prevent the flu is to get the flu vaccine. Other ways to prevent the spread of the flu are to cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough. To avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, and to wash your hands frequently with soap and water. Also, stay home if you are sick!

Cold versus Flu

- The Flu and the common cold are both respiratory illnesses but they are caused by different viruses. Because these two types of illnesses have similar symptoms it can be difficult to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. In general, the flu is worse than the common cold, and the symptoms of the Flu are more common and intense. Colds are usually milder than the flu. Colds generally do not result in serious health complications.
- Special tests can be carried out to tell if the person has the Flu.