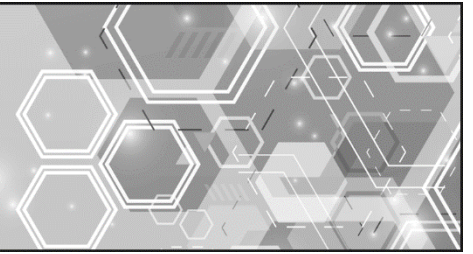




Durham Region Health Department **Facts about...**



Influenza (Flu)

What is it?

- Influenza (flu) is a respiratory illness caused by the Influenza A and B viruses that affects your nose, throat, and lungs.
- Most people who get the flu recover within 7-10 days.
- Some people can become very ill and need medical attention.
- It can lead to complications which may result in hospitalization or death.
- People at greatest risk of flu-related complications include:
 - Adults and children with chronic health conditions
 - Pregnant individuals
 - Indigenous peoples
 - Children 6 months to 4 years of age and people 65 years and older
 - People who are residents of long-term care homes and other chronic care facilities
 - People from marginalized communities
 - Healthcare workers
 - Individuals who work at poultry and livestock slaughterhouses or processing plants

What are common symptoms of the flu?

- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Stuffy nose and/or sneezing
- Sore throat
- Watery eyes
- Chest discomfort and/or coughing
- Muscles aches and pain
- Extreme weakness and tiredness
- Some people may have nausea/vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults

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How is it spread?

- The flu spreads mostly through coughing and sneezing. It can also be spread by touching a surface that has the flu virus and then touching your mouth, eyes, or nose.
- A person can spread the flu virus from one day before symptoms start and up to 5 days after becoming sick. Children and people with weakened immune systems may spread the virus for a longer time.

How to protect yourself and others from the flu

- Get your flu vaccine as soon as possible each year. It's the best way to prevent getting and spreading the flu. For more information, see [Facts About... Influenza Vaccines](#).
- Clean your hands often using soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue (and throw out) or your upper sleeve.
- Keep common surfaces and items clean and disinfected.
- Stay home if you are sick.

What to do if you or your loved one has the flu

- Stay home and get plenty of rest.
- Stay hydrated. Drink lots of fluids and avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol.
- Speak to your doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist about over-the-counter medications that can help you feel better (such as basic pain or fever relievers). Do not give acetylsalicylic acid (ASA or Aspirin®) to children or teenagers under the age of 18.
- Treat muscle pain using a hot water bottle or heating pad. Apply heat for short periods of time.
- Use spray or saline nose drops to treat a stuffy nose.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, tobacco, and second-hand smoke.
- Seek medical care if symptoms do not go away in a few days, get worse, or if you are in a high-risk group.

September 20, 2024

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