

EMS Health and Safety Bulletin: Understanding the Flu!

What is Influenza?

It is commonly referred to as “the flu”. It is a contagious respiratory illness that affects the nose, throat, and lungs.

Who gets Influenza?

Anyone can get it, but more serious side effects are likely in young children, older persons and persons with chronic illnesses or who are immunocompromised.

When is flu season?

In the U.S. influenza occurs most often in late fall/winter months, but can happen at any time.



Signs and Symptoms

- Sudden onset of fever
- Headache
- Chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- In children: vomiting and diarrhea

Who should be vaccinated?

All persons six months and older should be vaccinated. Particular effort should be made to immunize people at higher risk for influenza or complications, including:

- Pregnant and post-partum women, or those who will be pregnant during flu season
- Persons over 65 years of age, including residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- People who have chronic lung and heart problems
- People who have other serious medical conditions, such as diabetes, kidney disease, cystic fibrosis, etc.



How can Influenza be prevented?

1. Get vaccinated
2. Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, wash your hands, stay home from work, school or other activities when you are sick
3. Use antiviral drugs if your doctor recommends them