

# Influenza

## Definition

Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, is different from a cold, and usually comes on suddenly.

## Symptoms

Onset; the time from when a person is exposed and infected with flu to when symptoms begin is about 2 days but can range from about 1 to 4 days.

People who have flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- fever (not everyone with flu will have a fever)
- cough, sore throat
- sneezing, runny, or stuffy nose
- headaches, body aches
- fatigue
- sometimes abdominal pain, nausea, and vomiting

## How is it spread?

The virus is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes producing airborne droplets which come into contact with another person.

A person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

## Treatment

Most people recover with rest, drinking plenty of fluids, and the use of paracetamol/acetaminophen for pain and fever relief.

Antiviral medication can be prescribed by a Dr. and can decrease the duration and severity of the illness.

Seek medical advice if symptoms persist or worsen. The virus is detected via throat/nasal swab.

## Preventive measures

- Regular hand washing with proper drying of the hands
- Good respiratory hygiene – covering mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, using tissues and disposing of them correctly
- Early isolation of those feeling unwell, feverish, and having other symptoms of influenza to prevent the spread of infection. **Children should stay away from school until there has been no fever for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medication)**
- Flu vaccines reduce the risk of getting severe influenza especially in high risk groups. Vaccination is required every year as the virus is constantly changing so vaccines are altered to protect against new strains circulating.

**Please notify the school if your child has been diagnosed with influenza and provide the Health Centre with a letter stating they are fit to return to school issued by your doctor.**

If you have any queries or concerns please consult your healthcare provider or email the ISB Health Clinic; nurse@isb.ac.th

Ref: [www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm)

[www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-\(seasonal\)](http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-(seasonal))

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