



DAY IN DAY OUT

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

Vaccines

DON'T LET THE FLU TAKE YOU DOWN

Influenza is a respiratory illness caused by a virus, affecting the lungs, nose, and throat. This is also referred to as the flu and can sometimes be confused with the stomach flu, or gastroenteritis. They are entirely different (although neither one is fun!)

Symptoms of influenza can seem similar to the common cold but they come on more quickly and take you down much harder.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- » Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- » Cough
- » Sore throat
- » Runny or stuffy nose
- » Muscle or body aches
- » Headache
- » Fatigue
- » Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea (especially in children)

There are actually four different types of influenza: A, B, C, and D. There are also many subtypes and strains, but we won't concern ourselves with those details.

Influenza D primarily affects cattle and is not known to affect people at all.



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

Influenza C does affect people but is usually fairly mild and does not spread rapidly.

Influenza A and B are the ones that affect many people each winter.

WHAT IS AN EPIDEMIC?

An epidemic is when a disease affects more people than usual.

WHAT IS A PANDEMIC?

An influenza pandemic is when a new influenza strain spreads worldwide and most people do not have immunity.

HOW CAN WE PREVENT GETTING THE FLU?

The flu vaccine is our best defense against influenza. The vaccine is made each year to target the 3-4

influenza viruses we are most likely to encounter. It is 70-90% effective in preventing influenza and for those who still get the flu, the severity of symptoms will be lessened for those who received their vaccine. It not only protects us, but those around us who may be considered high-risk.

A common misconception is that you can get sick or get the flu after receiving the flu vaccine. There have been many studies done to research this and it is not true —there have been no changes regarding a high fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, etc.

What CAN occur after a flu vaccine: redness and tenderness where the shot was given (typically the upper arm) as well as headaches and a low-grade fever. These symptoms usually only last 1-2 days in those who experience them and are definitely better than getting the actual influenza virus.

WHEN IS FLU SEASON?

Every year the seasonal flu is different, but it typically begins around October and ends around May, peaking between December and February. It is recommended that you get the vaccine by the end of October each year but even if you haven't gotten it, it's not too late! You can still get it as late as the end of January. Everyone 6 months and older should be seeing their doctor about getting a vaccine.

HOW CAN WE FEEL BETTER IF WE GET THE FLU?

- » Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids.
- » Tylenol or ibuprofen can be used to help with body aches or fevers.
- » Try a cool-mist humidifier if your nose or throat feel dry/sore.
- » Salt water gargles, cough drops, or hard candy can help a sore throat.



- » Be patient! Let the flu run its course and you should feel better in a few days. No extra medication, such as Tamiflu, is needed unless you are high-risk (immunosuppressed, diabetic, have a heart condition, etc.) or it is recommended by your doctor. Please see your doctor if you're wondering if you or your child need medication
- » Don't forget that influenza is contagious, spread by coughing or sneezing. Always cough or sneeze into a tissue and throw it away, then wash your hands. Washing your hands is *the key* to keeping this virus to yourself. Once you feel better and are fever-free for at least 24 hours, you may head back to work.

WHERE CAN WE GET A FLU VACCINE?

Many of these places offer flu shots for free, making it easy and convenient. Depending on where you work, they may offer it there as well.

- » Grocery Stores
- » Pharmacies
- » Urgent Care Centers
- » Colleges
- » Doctors' offices
- » County Health Department