

Seasonal Influenza

Definition: The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu **vaccine** each year

Transmission: Flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or possibly their nose.

Symptoms:

- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults
- Fever and /or Chills

Exposure: Flu is spread by droplets and the infected persons contact with surfaces. It has been known to live from a few minutes to 24 hours in the right conditions. Basics like hand washing is very important.

Precautions and PPE considerations: Basic PPE considerations such as gloves, gown, and mask if you suspect influenza. Masking the patient can also be helpful. Use the vent fan during transport. Decon of unit should be very thorough and include surfaces that could have been touched by the patient

Treatments: The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine each season. About two weeks after vaccination, antibodies develop that protect against influenza virus infection. Flu vaccines will not protect against flu-like illnesses caused by non-influenza viruses

Work Guidelines: Personnel should be excluded from duty if they exhibit active signs of influenza. They are contagious during that time and up to 24 hours after their fever has ceased. They should not perform their job until they have been free of a fever for 24 hours.