

## WHO SHOULD NOT GET THE FLU SHOT?

- Infants 6 months and younger
- Individuals allergic to egg or egg products or any component of the vaccine - check with your doctor
- Those with history of neurological illness such as Guillan-Barre syndrome

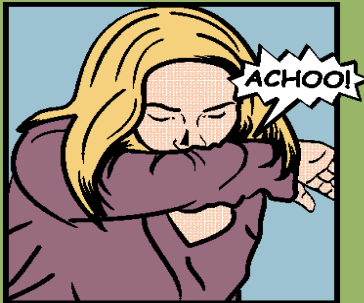
## TREATMENT FOR INFLUENZA?

- Drink plenty of clear fluids and rest
- Call your doctor if:
  - Symptoms are severe or not getting better
  - Coughing up phlegm or having trouble breathing
  - You are not sure

## OTHER INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES ON INFLUENZA:

- [www.toronto.ca/health/](http://www.toronto.ca/health/)
- [www.health.gov.on.ca/](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/)
- [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)

## No tissue?

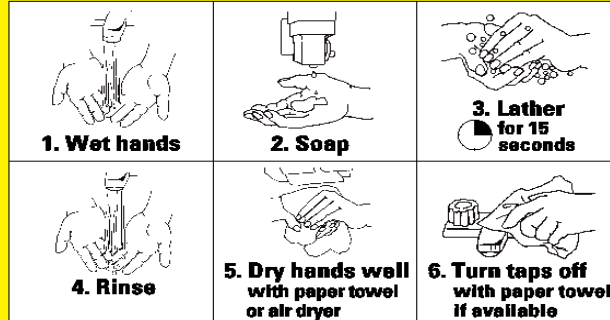


## Do the Sleeve Sneeze.

- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve
- Keep your hands clean
- Stop the spread of GERMS

# Always Practice!

## Handwashing



### Always Wash Your Hands

- before and after touching food
- after using the washroom
- after sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose
- after touching pets or handling garbage
- after outdoor activities

# Influenza

## Patient and Visitor Information

at St. Joseph's Health Centre, Toronto

# Influenza Information for Patients & Visitors

## **WHAT IS INFLUENZA (FLU?)**

Influenza, often called the flu, is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs caused by the influenza virus. It can spread around the world in epidemics and causes serious illness as well as death. In Canada the influenza season usually begins in October and can last to August.

## **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?**

Influenza symptoms may include fever, headache, muscle pain, runny nose, sore throat, extreme tiredness and cough. There may also be vomiting and/or diarrhea, often seen with children.

Symptoms can last for 2 to 10 days. You are contagious 1-2 days before symptoms start and as long as symptoms last.

## **HOW IS INFLUENZA SPREAD?**

Influenza spreads easily from person to person through breathing, coughing and sneezing. The virus can also spread when a person touches tiny droplets from coughs and sneezes on another person or an object and then touches their own mouth, eyes or nose before

washing their hands. It is very important to know that many people can have very mild symptoms often mistaken for the common cold. This is known as sub clinical illness and you are just as contagious at this time. This is the most common way influenza is spread in the hospital.

## **HOW DANGEROUS IS INFLUENZA?**

Every year in Canada, over 1,500 people die from the flu.

Influenza lowers the body's ability to fight other infections. A person with influenza is at risk of developing other infections such as pneumonia. This risk is greater for adults 65 years of age and older, young children, people with heart or lung diseases, with chronic health problems, especially pregnant women or persons with weakened immune systems.

## **HOW CAN INFLUENZA BE PREVENTED?**

An influenza vaccination, also known as flu shot, can help prevent you from getting sick with influenza or from spreading it to others. That's why it is important for children, adults and seniors, especially those with ongoing

health concerns, to protect themselves against it. Other ways it can be prevented include:

- Wash your hands often, particularly after coughing or touching your nose, eyes or mouth.
- Keep your hands away from your nose, eyes and mouth.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Do not visit patients in the hospital if you have cold or flu symptoms.

## **WHAT IS THE FLU VACCINE (FLU SHOT)?**

It is an inactivated (killed virus) vaccine that contains 3 different virus strains. It is prepared in egg. A person who receives the flu shot develops immunity for the types of flu in the vaccine.

It cannot give you the flu.

It begins working in 2 weeks. A flu shot is given each year because the viruses that cause it change every year.

## **HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE FLU VACCINE?**

Influenza vaccination protects 70% to 90% of healthy children and adults and protection usually lasts for about 6 months. It is less effective in those at higher risk such as the elderly and protection lasts about 4 months.