

Influenza

What is influenza?

- Influenza is a virus. There is Influenza A and B that typically circulate in the winter months. The flu usually hits Michigan in early December and can linger into the spring months.
- Influenza is not the “stomach flu.” The stomach flu is a viral stomach illness that causes vomiting and diarrhea.

What are the symptoms of influenza?

- High fever (103-105), cough, congestion, sore throat fatigue and muscle aches are the most common symptoms. Abdominal pain can occur, but is more rare.

What is the treatment for influenza?

- Supportive care includes rest, Ibuprofen or Tylenol, pushing fluids, chicken noodle soup and blowing the nose.
- If the symptoms are caught within 48 hours, a flu swab can be done and if positive, Tamiflu can be used.
- Tamiflu is an anti-viral medication that can shorten the duration and lessen the effects of the flu.

When can a child go back to school or daycare after catching the flu?

- The child must be fever free for 24 hours prior to returning.

Is influenza dangerous?

- The high-risk population is children under 2 years of age and children with pre-existing health conditions, as well as the elderly.

How can I prevent the flu?

- Get a flu shot! The flu shot does not cause the flu, for it is not a live virus vaccine. It is best given in September or October, yearly. The flu shot is 40-60% effective on a year where the vaccine is a good match. With children who were hospitalized or in rare cases fatalities, 80% had not received a flu vaccine.
- Wash your hands! The flu is spread like most respiratory illness, by aerosol droplets or by touching a contaminated surface.