



**BUG
OF THE MONTH**

For Staff /Patient Education

Influenza

August 2015

What is it?

- Influenza is a highly infectious viral illness. It is a single-stranded, helically shaped, RNA virus of the orthomyxovirus family.
- Influenza occurs throughout the world. Basic antigen types A, B, and C are determined by the nuclear material. (Influenza Virus strains)
 - Type A**-moderate to severe illness all age groups (humans and other animals.)
 - Type B**-milder disease primarily affects children (humans only.)
 - Type C**-rarely reported in humans (no epidemics)
- **Influenza Clinical Features:** Incubation period 2 days (range 1-4 days); 50% of infected persons develop classic symptoms: Abrupt onset of fever, myalgia, sore throat, nonproductive cough, headache.
- **Influenza Complications:** Pneumonia: (a) secondary bacterial; (b) primary influenza viral; Reye syndrome; Myocarditis; Death is reported less than 1 per 1,000 cases.

How is it spread?

- Influenza is primarily transmitted from person to person via large virus-laden droplets (particles more than 5 microns in diameter) that are generated when infected persons cough or sneeze. These large droplets can then settle on.
- Viral shedding starts 24 to 48 hours after infection, and typically 24 hours before the onset of symptoms. Shedding normally persists less than 5 days but can be longer in children and in the immunocompromised. Thus, adults are typically infectious from the day before symptoms begin until approximately 5 days after the onset of illness.

Where is it found?

- Humans are the only known reservoir of influenza types B and C. Influenza A viruses may infect both humans and animals. There is no chronic carrier state.

Prevention & Control:

- Vaccination is the primary method for preventing influenza and its complications.
- Healthcare worker compliance with annual influenza vaccination is an expected behavior to protect patients, staff, and families.
- Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette. Cover your cough or sneeze with tissue or your upper sleeves, and hand hygiene thereafter.
- Droplet Precautions in addition to Standard Precautions are effective infection prevention methods used to prevent influenza transmission in healthcare facilities.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way. Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you or your child gets sick with a respiratory illness, like flu, limit contact with others as much as possible to help prevent spreading illness. Stay home (or keep your child home) for at least 24 hours after fever is gone except to seek medical care or for other necessities. Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.
- If an outbreak of flu or another illness occurs, follow public health advice. This may include information about how to increase distance between people and other measures.
- Routinely clean frequently touched objects and surfaces, including doorknobs, keyboards, and phones, to help remove germs.
- Make sure your workplace has an adequate supply of tissues, soap, paper towels, alcohol-based hand rubs, and disposable wipes.
- If you begin to feel sick while at work, go home as soon as possible.

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Source:



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Concept adapted from Public Health Ontario-Regional Infection Control Network

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