

How Is Influenza Prevented?

- ✓ Annual influenza immunization (flu shot). Discuss it with your healthcare professional or the Vaccine Preventable Diseases program at the Health Unit.
It's the best protection you can have.
- ✓ Frequent hand washing.
- ✓ Covering your mouth and nose with your sleeve when sneezing or coughing.
- ✓ Avoiding people who are sick and have not been immunized.



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North Bay Parry Sound District
Health Unit

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INFLUENZA CARING FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY



North Bay Parry Sound District
Health Unit

What Is Influenza?

Influenza is an acute viral illness of the respiratory tract that is very contagious. It can cause symptoms such as fever, cough, headache, muscle aches, stuffy nose, sore throat and extreme fatigue.



Influenza in children can lead to croup, bronchiolitis, pneumonia, ear infections, diarrhea and seizures due to fever.

People infected with influenza can spread it from one day before to seven days after the onset of symptoms.

For most people, influenza lasts one or two weeks, but can last for up to one month.

How Do You Get It?

- ✓ Through the air from an infected person sneezing, coughing or talking.
- ✓ By direct contact with infected people or contaminated surfaces (eg, toys, eating/drinking utensils, telephones, etc).
- ✓ By spending time, working or living in crowded or enclosed spaces such as school buses, classrooms, daycare centres, work places or institutions.

What To Do If You Get Influenza

- ✓ **Rest** - Get plenty of rest as you will likely feel weak and tired. Resting will provide comfort and allow your body to use its energy to fight the infection.
- ✓ **Drink plenty of fluids** - Extra fluids such as water and juice will help replace fluids lost because of the fever. Warm fluids will help loosen mucus.
- ✓ **Medication** - Ask your health care professional about medication to reduce aches, pains and fever (eg, acetaminophen or ibuprofen). **Children under 18 years of age should not take aspirin (ASA)**. The combination of ASA and influenza has been known to cause Reye's syndrome, a rare but serious condition that affects the brain and liver. Antibiotics are not effective against viral infections such as influenza, but are prescribed for complications such as bacterial pneumonia.
- ✓ **Stay at home** - Stay away from children, elderly people or anyone with a medical condition, to protect them from influenza.
- ✓ **Handwashing and personal hygiene** - Practice frequent hand-washing with soap and water after sneezing, coughing and/or using the restroom. Throw away used tissues immediately.
- ✓ **Cover your cough** - cough and sneeze into your sleeve, not into your hands.
- ✓ **Saline nose drops** - You may consider using drops that contain salt water to help soothe or clear a stuffed nose.



See Your Health Care

Professional If:

- ✓ Breathing is difficult or painful while resting;
- ✓ You are coughing up thick sputum, sputum that is not clear, or bloody sputum;
- ✓ You are wheezing;
- ✓ You have had a fever for three or four days and are not feeling better; or
- ✓ You have started to feel better and suddenly develop a high fever and feel ill again.

Be Prepared

- ✓ Have enough fluids (eg, juice, soup, bottled water) and basic household items on hand to last you and your family one week.
- ✓ Keep your medicine cabinet stocked.
- ✓ Arrange a contact person if you or a family member becomes ill with influenza. Write down their name and number and discuss it with that person.

