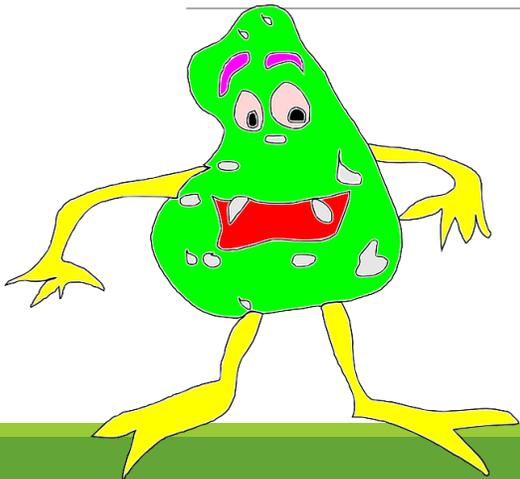


Influenza Virus

“THE FLU”: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW!
LATANJA L. DIVENS, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC





INFLUENZA VIRUS: “THE FLU”

- Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza viruses
- People often mistake “The Flu” for a “COMMON COLD”
 - In reality, “The flu” is different from a Cold
 - A common cold is usually not as severe as the flu
- The flu can cause mild to severe illness and requires evaluation by a medical provider
- Severe cases may result in people being hospitalized and even “DEATH”

Flu Season: When does it occur?

- In the United States, “flu season” occurs in the winter
- Flu outbreaks can happen as early as October and can last as late as May
- The Centers for Disease Control says the flu season begins when certain key flu indicators rise and remain elevated for a number of consecutive weeks
- Key flu indicators include:
 - Levels of influenza-like illness present in the community
 - Hospitalization required for flu-like illnesses
 - Deaths due to the flu virus



The Flu: Who's at Greatest Risk

- Everyone is at risk for the flu but some populations are more susceptible than others
- Older people, young children, immunocompromised (those at risk for infection) & chronically ill people are at greatest risk

***All children aged 6 through 59 months;**

***All persons aged 50 years or older**

•Adults and children who have:

- Chronic pulmonary conditions (including asthma)
- Cardiovascular conditions with the exception of isolated hypertension
- Renal, hepatic, neurologic, hematologic, or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus)
- Persons who have immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by HIV infection);

•Women who are or will be pregnant during the influenza season

•Children and adolescents (aged 6 months through 18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy and who might be at risk for experiencing Reye's syndrome after influenza virus infection

•Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities

•American Indians/Alaska Natives; and

• Persons who are morbidly obese (BMI \geq 40).

The Flu: Signs & Symptoms

Symptoms of “The Flu” usually present suddenly

People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever or “feeling feverish” and may have chills
 - It's important to know that not everyone with the flu will have a fever.
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Vomiting and diarrhea

(more common in children than adults)

[Video: Flu Symptoms](#)



Flu: Emergency Warning Signs

[Video: Flu Warning Signs](#)



Flu Prevention: What can you do?

[Video: Why should I get a Flu vaccine?](#)

- The best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated each year
- Routine annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons aged 6 months and older who do not have any contraindications to the vaccine.
- Vaccination should occur before the onset of influenza activity in the community.
- Vaccinations are recommended to be received annually by **October**, if possible
- If the vaccine is not received by October, it should be offered to people as long as the influenza viruses are circulating



Flu Treatment: If you become infected

- There are medications used to treat the flu called antivirals
- Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid, an inhaled powder, or an intravenous solution) that fight against the flu in your body
- Antiviral drugs are not sold over-the-counter.
- You can only get them if you have a prescription from your doctor or health care provider.
- Antiviral drugs are different from antibiotics, which fight against bacterial infections.
- If you get the flu, antiviral drugs are a treatment option and a second line defense to treat the flu
- Antivirals can decrease the length (shorten course of the flu by 1-2 days) and can decrease the severity of the flu
- **REMEMBER: The Flu vaccine is your 1st line of protection and even if you get the flu, you SHOULD STILL BE VACCINATED!**

Resources & Reference

Please visit the following website for additional details:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/faq/index.htm>

http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/treating_flu.pdf

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/antivirals/index.htm>