



INFLUENZA

WHAT IS INFLUENZA?

INFLUENZA OR "FLU" IS A RESPIRATORY DISEASE CAUSED BY A VIRUS. THERE ARE TWO MAIN TYPES OF INFLUENZA VIRUS - A AND B. TYPE A IS USUALLY MORE FREQUENT AND MORE SEVERE THAN TYPE B.

HOW IS INFLUENZA SPREAD?

INFLUENZA IS SPREAD FROM PERSON TO PERSON WHEN DROPLETS OF MOISTURE FROM A PERSON WITH INFLUENZA ARE SPREAD THROUGH THE AIR WHEN THAT PERSON COUGHS, SNEEZES OR TALKS. THESE DROPLETS CARRY THE VIRUSES, WHICH CAN THEN CAUSE INFECTION IN PEOPLE.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF INFLUENZA?

INFLUENZA SYMPTOMS INCLUDE FEVER, CHILLS, HEADACHE, DRY COUGH, AND SORENESS AND ACHING IN THE BACK, ARMS, AND LEGS.

HOW SOON DO SYMPTOMS APPEAR?

SYMPTOMS APPEAR ONE TO THREE DAYS AFTER INFECTION.

HOW IS INFLUENZA TREATED?

MEDICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE TREATMENT AND PREVENTION OF INFLUENZA. THESE DRUGS MAY REDUCE THE SEVERITY OF INFLUENZA A IF THERAPY IS STARTED EARLY IN THE COURSE OF THE ILLNESS. BED REST, DRINKING MORE THAN THE USUAL AMOUNT OF LIQUIDS, AND TAKING PAIN RELIEVERS TO HELP REDUCE THE DISCOMFORT OF ILLNESS ARE RECOMMENDED. CHILDREN WITH INFLUENZA SHOULD NOT BE TREATED WITH ASPIRIN.

HOW SERIOUS IS INFLUENZA?

INFLUENZA ILLNESS RANGES FROM VERY MILD TO SEVERE, DEPENDING ON SUCH FACTORS AS THE INFLUENZA STRAIN INVOLVED, AND THE PERSONS GENERAL PHYSICAL CONDITION. MOST PEOPLE RECOVER WITHIN A WEEK, HOWEVER, INFLUENZA CAN LAST LONGER AND CAUSE LIFE-THREATENING PROBLEMS.

HOW IS INFLUENZA PREVENTED?

THERE IS A VACCINE TO PROTECT AGAINST INFLUENZA. BECAUSE THE INFLUENZA VIRUS CHANGES FROM YEAR TO YEAR, IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE VACCINATED AGAINST INFLUENZA EACH YEAR. FLU SHOTS ARE ONLY PROTECTIVE FOR ABOUT A YEAR.