

HEALTH SERVICES – INFLUENZA (FLU)

What is the Flu? – Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus. The virus attacks the nose, throat, and lungs. It is NOT the “stomach flu”. The flu can in most cases be prevented by an annual vaccination.

How is the flu spread? – The flu is spread when an infected person who has the flu coughs or sneezes and sends the flu virus into the air. The virus enters the nose, throat, or lungs of a person and multiplies in their body. Flu also can be spread when a person touches the surface of an object that has flu viruses on it. The virus then enters the body when someone touches their nose, eyes, or mouth.

What are the symptoms of the flu? – Symptoms include fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches. Children can also have nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

What should you do if you suspect you have the flu? – Seek medical attention. Your physician may prescribe a medicine that can shorten the length of your flu symptoms. Additional treatments include: stay at home, drink plenty of fluids, cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing, wash your hands frequently, and treat the fever.

DO NOT USE ASPIRIN OR ANY OTHER MEDICATIONS THAT CONTAIN ASPIRIN OR SALICYLATES FOR FEVER OR SYMPTOMS THAT ACCOMPANY CHICKENPOX OR INFLUENZA (FLU). Many drugs contain these ingredients, so you MUST read all labels carefully. A very serious complication can develop called Reye’s Syndrome if aspirin is taken.