

## FLU SEASON IS HERE AGAIN! WHY IS THE INFLUENZA SUCH A BIG DEAL ANYWAY?

It is estimated that between 10-20% of the population becomes infected with influenza each year. In any given year, an average of 12,200 hospitalizations related to influenza and approximately 3,500 deaths attributable to influenza occur.

Influenza (the "flu" virus) is a respiratory illness. It usually has a sudden onset and starts with headache, chills, and a cough, followed by a fever, loss of appetite, muscle aches, and fatigue.

There are simple ways to help protect yourself and others from influenza. The most effective prevention is to receive the influenza vaccine. The vaccine helps to protect you and individuals around you from illness.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends influenza immunization for:

- All healthy individuals aged 6 months or older
- Individuals at high risk of influenza related complications or hospitalization
- Individuals capable of transmitting influenza to others at high risk (healthcare workers)
- Individuals who provide essential community services (firemen, ambulance, police)

### NEW THIS 2014-2015 INFLUENZA SEASON

One of the most significant developments for the 2014-2015 influenza season is the availability of two quadrivalent vaccines (Flulaval™ Tetra and Fluzone® Quadrivalent) that provide increased protection against **influenza B**. These vaccines have the same three components as the trivalent vaccine plus B/Brisbane/60/2008-live virus. The quadrivalent vaccines are indicated for individuals 6 months of age or older.

NACI clarifies that the Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV) Flumist® is the preferred vaccine in children under 6 years of age and is authorized for individuals 2-59 years.

NACI also states that individuals with **egg allergies** may receive either the trivalent or the new quadrivalent influenza vaccine without a prior skin test and with a full dose. This can be administered in any setting provided that the immunizers have emergency equipment and treatment available and the resident is observed for 30 minutes. Data is currently not available to support any recommendations surrounding egg allergies and LAIV therefore individuals with egg allergies should avoid using Flumist®.

### INFLUENZA VACCINE FOR 2014-2015

The recommended seasonal trivalent influenza vaccine for 2014-2015 will contain:

- A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus
- A/Texas/50/2012 (H3N2) like- virus
- B/Massachusetts/2/2012-like virus (Yamagata lineage)

The quadrivalent vaccine contains the above three strains plus:

- B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus

### PREVENT THE SPREAD OF INFLUENZA

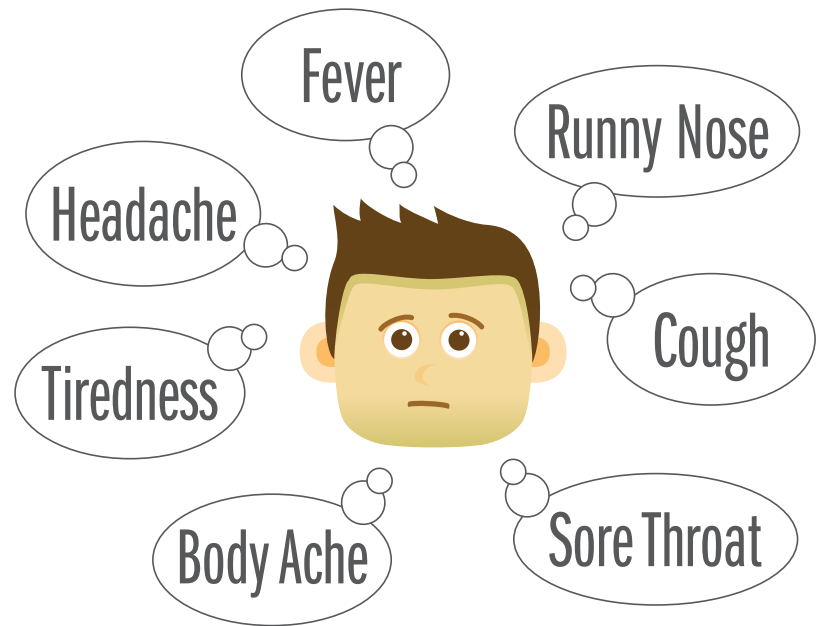
Droplet precautions, like covering your cough, are very important because droplets from a cough or sneeze can be propelled up to 3 feet. If you cough or sneeze into your upper arm or a tissue, this can help prevent others from getting ill. Droplet precautions are also important to keep the virus from landing on surfaces that other individuals may come into contact with. The flu virus can survive on surfaces from 2 to 8 hours and sometimes even up to 48 hours!

The way the virus causes illness is by coming into contact with mucous membranes, such as the eyes, nose, or mouth. When in public areas or at work, it is a good idea not to touch any of these areas of your body unless you have just washed or sanitized your hands.

Hand hygiene is very important. The influenza virus is easily killed by hand washing or hand sanitizer.

# DID YOU KNOW?

- YOU CAN'T GET THE "FLU" FROM THE "FLU SHOT."
- IT TAKES ABOUT TWO WEEKS AFTER THE INFLUENZA VACCINATION INJECTION BEFORE IT PROVIDES FULL PROTECTION
- IMMUNITY USUALLY LASTS LESS THAN 1 YEAR THEREFORE THE BEST WAY TO PROTECT AGAINST INFLUENZA AND TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF INFLUENZA INFECTION IS TO GET VACCINATED EVERY YEAR.



INFLUENZA	SYMPTOMS	COMMON COLD
Usually High Fever, can last 3-4 days (Note: not everyone with the flu will have a fever)	High Fever (38-40 °C)	Sometimes Rare
Usually Can be severe	Headache	Rare
Usually Frequent, Can be severe	Muscle Aches/Pains/Chills	Sometimes Mild
Usually Severe, may last 2-3 weeks	General Fatigue and Weakness	Sometimes Mild
Usually Early onset and can be severe	Extreme Tiredness (Fatigue)	Rare
Usually Can be severe	Chest Discomfort, Coughing	Sometimes Mild to Moderate
Sometimes Throat Irritation	Sore Throat	Sometimes Common
Sometimes	Sneezing	Common
Common	Runny, Stuffy Nose	Common
Always	Symptoms Appear Quickly –Sudden Onset	More Gradual

**Your Remedy'sRx Pharmacist can provide you with information and support for the upcoming influenza season.**

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