



Lenawee County
HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

INFLUENZA (Flu) FACT SHEET

What is Influenza or The Flu?

The flu is a highly contagious viral illness that infects the respiratory tract and is more severe than other similar illnesses such as the common cold. The flu changes every year so a vaccine is created for each flu season. Being up to date on your vaccination is vital to prevention. Flu season lasts from October through March with December through February as peak months.

What are the symptoms?

- Sudden onset of symptoms
- Fever (In most cases)
- Aches
- Chills
- Runny nose and cough
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea & vomiting are common in children.

Symptoms appear usually 1 to 4 days after exposure. Typically lasts 1-2 weeks.

How can it be prevented?

- The best way to prevent the flu is to get the seasonal flu vaccine every year.
- Thorough handwashing and being sure to cough and sneeze into a tissue or sleeve.
- Avoid those who are sick

How can it be spread?

- HIGHLY contagious between people.
- Spread through droplets released when the sick cough, sneeze or talk.
- Remain infectious 1 day before symptoms and 5-7 after the disappear.

How it is treated?

- Most medications treat symptoms but prescription anti-virals are available
- Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration
- **Do not return to work, school or day-care until you are cleared by a health care provider**
- The flu may cause complications such as Bacterial pneumonia, severe dehydration or worsening of existing chronic conditions (heart disease, asthma) SEE DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY