



Influenza (Flu)



Overview

This is an infectious disease commonly called "the flu." It targets your respiratory system. For some people, an influenza infection can be very serious.

Causes

Your flu can be caused by one of several influenza viruses. These viruses can spread from person to person through coughs and sneezes. Influenza viruses are divided into three main categories: A, B and C. Type A and B viruses are responsible for seasonal flu epidemics. Type C viruses cause only mild illness. They are not thought to cause outbreaks.

Symptoms

Symptoms of the flu may include fever, aches and chills. You may have a headache and a cough. You may feel congested, and you may have a sore throat. You may feel tired and weak.

Prevention and Treatment

You can prevent the spread of influenza by getting a yearly flu vaccine. Wash your hands frequently, and contain your coughs and sneezes. Avoid places where many people gather to limit your contact with these viruses. If you do get the flu, you may benefit from rest and fluids. You may benefit from medications to treat your symptoms or to reduce the length of your illness. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for your needs.