

So I Have the Flu. Now What?

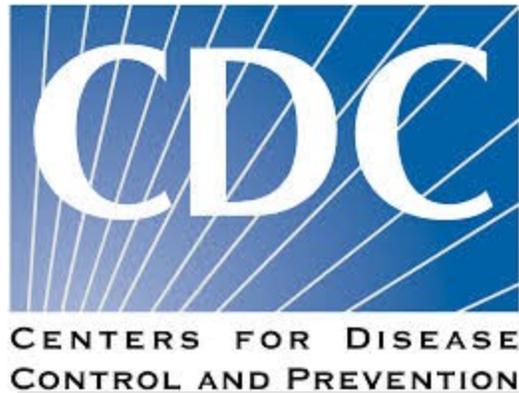
Most patients do not need any form of medical care. They will recover most quickly by just resting and drinking plenty of fluids. However, if you or your family member is a part of a high risk group or exhibiting unusually severe symptoms contact your health care provider. If the symptoms have reached the point where the patient is having difficulty breathing, sudden dizziness, chest pain, or severe vomiting a trip to the emergency room may be necessary. Be careful when taking this step. While waiting you may come into contact with someone who does have the flu so save the ER for emergencies.

There are treatments for influenza called anti-viral drugs. These have a limited effectiveness among healthy people with uncomplicated influenza. However, they can be valuable among elderly patients, people with chronic health problems, or those who develop severe complications. Your health care provider will be able to tell you if you will benefit from antiviral medication. Antibiotics will have effect on the flu.



I Would Like to Learn More

The CDC has an excellent website that is easy to understand and provides a great deal of information on the flu at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/index.htm>.



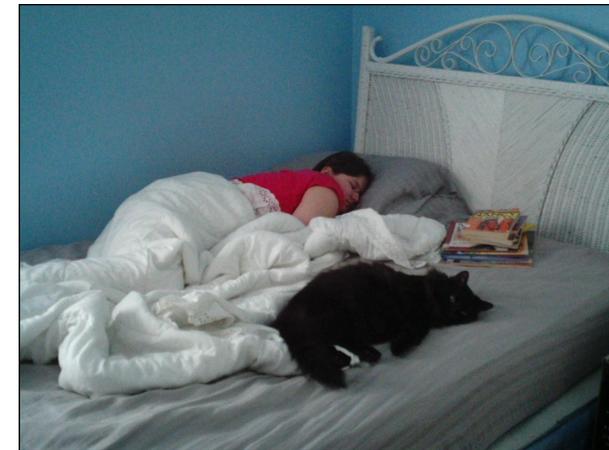
Davis County Hospital

509 North Madison Street
Bloomfield, Iowa
52537

Phone: 641-664-2145
www.DavisCountyHospital.org

Davis County Hospital

What Do I Need to Know About the Flu?



Phone Number: 641-664-2145
DavisCountyHospital.org

What is (and is not) the Flu?



Vaccine Being Prepared by Davis County Public Health

Influenza, colloquially referred to as the flu, is a respiratory illness caused by one of a family of similar viruses. Influenza often manifests itself with fever, coughing, aches, fatigue, a sore throat, and occasionally vomiting or diarrhea. What is often called the stomach flu is usually a disease called gastroenteritis or GE. As opposed to influenza which attacks the respiratory system GE attacks the stomach and intestinal track causing stomach pains and cramping, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Unlike influenza, GE often can be treated with antibiotics.

How Bad is it?

The severity of Flu is unpredictable depending upon what virus is causing the illness and the person's risk for serious complications. Influenza often weakens the body to other problems making the illness more severe. This makes the exact number of deaths associated with seasonal flu very difficult to pin down. The CDC estimates in the thirty years between 1977 and 2009 between 3000 and 49000 people's deaths could be associated with influenza.

What Good is Getting Vaccinated Going to do Me?

The single best way to prevent the flu is to be vaccinated near the beginning of each flu season. The Flu season in Iowa usually starts in October or November and last until March. People more at risk for complications, children, and the elderly should receive vaccination priority, but the protection grows stronger the more people in a group are protected drastically slowing the spread. This is especially important when interacting with older adults whose bodies can no longer build as effective an immunity as they once did after being vaccinated. Flu vaccines protect against the virus expected to be most common that season. The Flu Vaccine is not a perfect defense against getting the flu, but it is always a good idea to increase your defenses.

What Else Can I Do to Avoid Getting the Flu?

Be sure to practice good hygiene, especially good hand hygiene washing with soap and water. Also make sure to disinfect frequently touched surfaces regularly especially in areas with many people. If you think you or a family member may be ill remain at home. Your absence will be less of a burden than the ripple of effect of spreading the disease. The flu is highly contagious and people often become contagious about a day before feeling any adverse effects. They will remain contagious for probably around 5-7 days.

But I Know Someone Who Got Sick Right After Getting the Flu Vaccine-

There are several explanations for this occurrence. If it is actually the flu then it may already have been incubating prior to the person getting the vaccine,



or the person may have contracted the virus before their body had enough time to properly process the



vaccine, which usually takes about 2 weeks to gradually reach maximum effectiveness. Or they may have managed to contract a type of virus they didn't vaccinate themselves against. Alternatively, the illness in question may be totally unrelated to the influenza and simply have been poor luck. Lastly, during the period in which the body is processing the vaccine the immune system will be more active which may produce some discomfort.

Davis County Hospital

Phone: 641-664-2145

www.DavisCountyHospital.org