Influenza (Flu)

Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. There are two main types of influenza (flu) viruses: Types A and B. The illness is self-limited with severe symptoms usually lasting 3-4 days and feeling back to normal within 2 weeks. Self-limited infections can be treated without seeing a medical provider.

**Symptoms:**
- Sudden/rapid onset of symptoms
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fever or feeling feverish with chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea

**Self-care measures:**
- Rest
- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids
- Use saline nose drops to loosen mucus
- Use Ibuprofen (Advil®) 600 mg every 6-8 hours or Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) 650 mg every 6 hours as needed to reduce fever/discomfort
- Use Oral Decongestant (Pseudoephedrine) for short-term relief of nasal congestion
- Gargle with salt water and use throat sprays/lozenges (containing Benzocaine) for throat pain
- Use heated, humidified air (if you do not have a humidifier, try taking a hot shower)

**Special Note:** Antiviral medication (Tamiflu®) is only recommended for patients with serious underlying medical conditions who are at risk for severe complications (such as pregnancy, immunocompromised, chronic medical conditions, or morbidly obese).

**Limit spread to others:**
- Stay home and away from others until fever-free for more than 24 hours (temperature should be less than 100 degrees Fahrenheit without medication)
- Wash hands frequently
- Wear a mask

**When to seek care from a medical provider:**
- If you are at high risk for complications (such as pregnancy, immunocompromised, chronic medical conditions, or morbidly obese)
- Fever over 102 degrees Fahrenheit that lasts for more than 3 days
- For symptoms that last over 10 days and get worse instead of better
- Shortness of breath
- Confusion or disorientation
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Pain/pressure in your chest
- Severe sinus pain
- Very swollen glands in the neck or jaw

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