

FACT SHEET

INFLUENZA

<i>What is Influenza?</i>	Influenza or “the flu” is a highly contagious viral infection of the respiratory tract (nose, throat and lungs)
<i>How is it spread?</i>	It is spread from person-to-person mainly by direct contact with infectious droplets from the upper respiratory tract of an infected person (coughing, sneezing, talking). Sometimes a person can catch the flu by touching a surface (doorknob, light switch, table top, etc) where infected droplets have landed and then touching their eyes, mouth, or nose.
<i>What is the incubation period?</i>	Flu symptoms develop quickly, usually 1-4 days after a person is exposed to the flu virus.
<i>What are the early signs?</i>	Fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches. Small children can also have nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.
<i>What about contacts?</i>	Children who develop a fever should be sent home from school.
<i>How long is the person contagious?</i>	Influenza is contagious beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 days after becoming sick.
<i>When is it OK to return to school/daycare?</i>	Children should not return to school or daycare until <i>at least</i> 24 hours after the fever is gone and the child is feeling well again.
<i>Other Important Information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flu is often confused with the common cold, but flu symptoms tend to develop quickly and are usually more severe than the typical sneezing and congestion associated with a cold. • Remind children to cover their mouth and nose when they cough or sneeze, to wash their hands frequently, and to keep their hands away from their eyes and mouth. • Vaccination against the flu each year is the single best way to prevent influenza.

This fact sheet is not intended to replace the advice of your physician. Parents should contact their healthcare provider if they have concerns regarding their child’s health. If you have general questions, you may contact a Kalamazoo County nurse at 373-5264 or 373-5267.