

## **Influenza**

*Remember an ounce of prevention will keep you healthy!*

Flu season is here! It is important to take precautions in order to prevent the spread of illness.

Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is a respiratory illness. Symptoms include fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, stuffy/runny nose and muscle aches. Children may also experience nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

**The single best way to prevent the spread of flu is to get vaccinated.**

- There is no shortage of vaccine this year so call your doctor. There is still plenty of time to get vaccinated.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and hot water for 10 to 30 seconds is very important. If soap and water is not available use antibacterial hand sanitizer.
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing is another good habit to develop.
- The flu virus can live on surfaces for hours; if a tissue is not available cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Other suggestions are to keep your distance when speaking to people, avoiding close contact with someone who is sick, staying home from work and school when you are sick.

Despite all your efforts you may still develop the flu this season. If you develop the flu it is important to get plenty of rest and drink plenty of fluids. There are some prescription anti-viral medications that can be taken within 36 hours of the development of flu symptoms. Contact your doctor to see if you are able to use these medications.