

**AS Facer (Longton) Ltd**  
**66 Liverpool Road**  
**Longton**  
**Preston PR4 5PB**  
**Tel: 01772 613 286**



## Influenza

### Definition

Influenza (also known as seasonal flu) is a highly infectious illness caused by a flu virus.

### Signs and symptoms

Symptoms of Influenza appear suddenly, unlike the common cold, where less-severe symptoms appear gradually. The gap between exposure to the flu virus and development of symptoms is 2 to 3 days. A person becomes infectious approximately one day before the onset of symptoms.

Acute symptoms last for 3 to 7 days with complete recovery taking up to three weeks. Symptoms include:

- Fever and/or chills. Temperature usually reaches 38 degrees C/100 degrees F and can rise to 41 degrees C/105.8 degrees F. (The common cold usually involves a small increase in temperature.)
- Body aches and pains which cause the whole body to ache, particularly the joints. (In the case of the common cold, aching is mild and usually confined to the legs.)
- Fatigue.
- Cough and an extremely sore throat. (The common cold involves a less severe, "scratchy" throat.)
- Headache which is usually severe. (Minor headache is associated with the common cold.)

Influenza usually lasts for 1-2 weeks, with chest problems being common. In contrast, people usually recover quite quickly from the common cold.

Complications of Influenza include pneumonia, sinusitis, bronchitis and otitis media in children.

### SYMPTOMS IN CHILDREN

It is advisable that parents of sick children should seek medical attention early if children have respiratory illness such as cough or difficulty breathing with fever and lethargy.

### Treatment options

Always consult your Doctor for diagnosis and advice. This information is in no way intended to

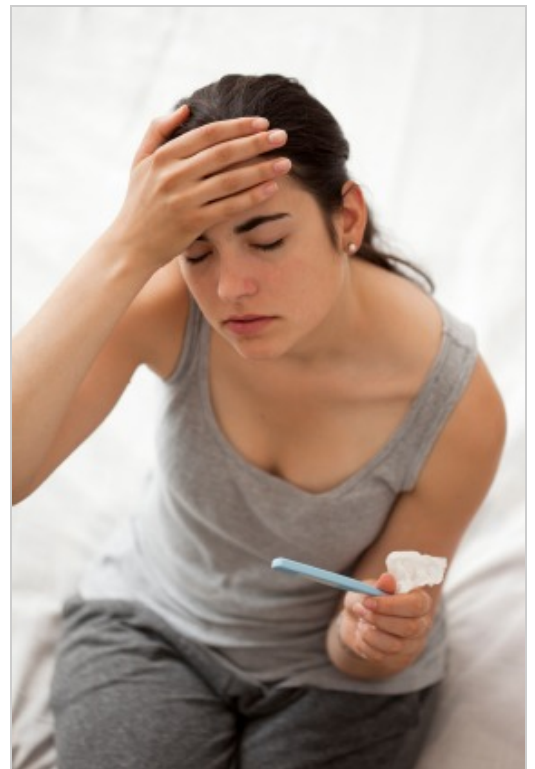
### Suggested solutions

#### General

- » Paracetamol or ibuprofen
- » Germicidal handwash

#### Natural

- » Vitamin C



replace the advice of a medical practitioner.

### **Prevention**

The Influenza Vaccine is available for high-risk persons. See the Influenza Vaccine topic.

### **Treatment - Drugs**

There are drugs available from your Doctor for the treatment of all strains of Influenza A and B. These drugs must be taken within 48 hours of symptom onset to be effective. These drugs can reduce the severity of symptoms by almost half and reduce secondary complications by up to 50%.

### **Treatment - Other**

- Bed rest is recommended.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Antipyretics (drugs that reduce fever)/analgesics (drugs that relieve pain) provide relief from fever, headache and muscle pains. Aspirin should not be given to children with Influenza due to the possible risk of developing Reye's syndrome.
- Decongestants can provide relief from nasal obstruction or catarrh.

Aspirin should not be given to children under 16 years of age unless specified by a Doctor.

### **Prevention**

Annual vaccination against Influenza is recommended for certain groups at risk. Discuss Influenza vaccination with your Doctor and see the Influenza Vaccine topic on the Healthpoint for more information. Other preventative measures include; avoiding people infected with the Flu, washing hands regularly and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

### **Vitamins/minerals/herbs**

Supplements may only be of value if dietary intake is inadequate.

- Vitamin A, beta carotene, vitamin C with bioflavonoids and vitamin E are associated with healthy immune function.
- Zinc is also an important element of the immune process and is thought to work in conjunction with many of the vitamins mentioned above.
- Selenium deficiency may cause longer and more severe influenza infections.
- Echinacea, garlic and golden seal are reputed to have anti-bacterial properties, along with immune enhancing activity.
- Horseradish and elecampane may assist in resolving mucus.
- Chamomile, liquorice, yarrow, boneset, peppermint and elderflower are herbs which make soothing teas reputed to ease the symptoms of colds and flu.

### **Aromatherapy**

The listed essential oils are suggested for the temporary relief of the symptoms of Influenza. The most specific oils are shown in capitals.

Aniseed, Basil, Citronella, EUCALYPTUS, Grapefruit, Lavender, Lemon, Lime, Myrrh, Orange, Peppermint, PINE, TEA TREE, THYME

### **Application**

MASSAGE: Blend any single listed essential oil or combination of several essential oils - 5 drops (total) to 10mL (1/3 fl oz) vegetable carrier oil ie: Sweet Almond, Apricot Kernel. Apply twice daily to chest, upper back and throat with gentle massage.

STEAM INHALATION: In a bowl containing one litre of steaming water add 5 drops (total) of

essential oil; cover head with towel and inhale while leaning over bowl. Keep eyes closed.

VAPORISATION: Add 5 drops (total) single essential oil or combination of several essential oils listed to water in oil burner.

The following recommendations are for an adult. For infants over 3 months and up to 2 years use 1/4 dose i.e.: 1 drop to 10ml (1/3 fl oz) ; children 2-12 years and during pregnancy use 1/2 dose.

### **Pharmacist's advice**

Ask your Pharmacist for advice.

- 1) See the Influenza Diet and Influenza Vaccine topics on the Healthpoint.
- 2) Have adequate rest.
- 3) Avoid smoking. Ask your Pharmacist for help to stop smoking.
- 4) Increase fluid intake.
- 5) A variety of cold medications will help relieve the symptoms of Influenza. Ask your Pharmacist for advice.
- 6) Using a **germicidal handwash** can help to prevent the spread of infection to others.
- 7) A suitable **pain relieving tablet** such as paracetamol or ibuprofen might be suggested to provide relief from fever, headache and muscle pains.
- 8) **Decongestants** can provide relief from nasal obstruction, sinus or ear pain.
- 9) If dietary intake is inadequate supplements may be of benefit. Ask your Pharmacist for advice and see the **Vitamins/Minerals/Herbs** section in this topic.

DISCLAIMER : This information is an educational aid only. It is not intended to replace medical advice for individual conditions or treatments. Talk to your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or naturopath before following any medical regimen to see whether it is safe and effective for you.