



Introduction

It's that time of year again, sniffles, sneezing, coughing, and wheezing. Sometimes, those sniffles can take a turn for the worst and become the dreaded influenza virus.

According to the Center for Disease Control, the United States had more than 15 million cases of the flu in 2019 alone! It's easy to underestimate the dangers of the flu virus because it is so common. However, the flu can lead to hospitalization and in some cases, death.

This week we will get a better understanding of what the influenza virus is, different types of the virus, how to prevent it, and what to do if you get sick.

Monday – Understanding the Influenza Virus

Influenza is a viral infection that attacks the lungs, nose, and throat. There are 4 types of influenza: A, B, C, and D.

Types A and B are the viruses that routinely spread in people and are responsible for the seasonal flu epidemic each year. Type A is the only type of influenza that is known to cause flu pandemics (global epidemics of flu disease) and can affect all species. Type B only affects humans.

Type C is a mild form of influenza and does not cause flu epidemics. Unlike types A, B, and C, type D only affects cattle and livestock, not humans.

Tuesday – Influenza Prevention

Now that we understand what the influenza virus is, let's discuss some helpful tips to prevent contracting the illness.

- Ensure your vaccinations are up to date. Yearly vaccinations are the best form of prevention!
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Wednesday – Influenza Signs and Symptoms

Below are a list of signs and symptoms that often accompany the influenza virus. Keep an eye out for these to prevent contracting or spreading the virus.

- Fever and/or chills
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Runny or Stuffy Nose
- Muscle or Body Aches
- Headaches



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 6 – February 10-14, 2020

Influenza Season

- Fatigue
- Vomiting or Diarrhea

Thursday – What to Do If You Get Sick

Sometimes precautions are not enough and in the unfortunate event that you do get sick, here are some helpful tips to avoid spreading the illness to friends, family, and co-workers.

- Stay at home when you are sick. Do not go to work. Either take a sick day or work from home.
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing.
- Clean your hands frequently, especially before using items that others may use after you.
- Avoid being in close quarters with others if possible.

Friday – Practice Other Good Health Habits

This week we've discussed helpful precautions regarding the flu virus. Here are a few additional tips to help you avoid getting sick this season:

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched items at home, work, or school.
- Get plenty of sleep, manage your stress, and stay physically active.
- Drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious foods.

Discussion: What are some ways you and your loved ones stay healthy during the cold and flu season?