

Protecting Yourself and Others Against Influenza



- **Get an annual flu vaccine.** Influenza viruses change continuously, so a new vaccine is created each year. The vaccine helps protect against the most likely strains of influenza circulating in the community. The vaccine is recommended for anyone who wants to reduce their risk of influenza, especially those at high risk for flu-related complications and severe disease.

Cough or sneeze into a tissue or sleeve. Do not cough or sneeze into your hands.

Currently, there are two types of vaccine – a flu shot and a nasal spray. The flu shot is approved for anyone older than 6 months. People age 5 to 49 can get the nasal-spray flu vaccine if they are not pregnant or have a weakened immune system. Annual flu vaccine is effective only against seasonal flu and will not protect against pandemic influenza.

- **Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your upper sleeve.** Discard used tissues and wash your hands afterwards. Do not cough or sneeze into your hands.



- **Wash your hands.** Always wash hands after coughing, sneezing, using tissues, using the toilet, and touching public surfaces (such as door handles, shopping carts, etc). Be sure to wash your hands after any contact with a person who has the flu or with their immediate surroundings – their home or their room.



Always wash your hands before touching eyes, nose, mouth, inserting contact lenses and preparing food. See the Hand Washing Guide on page 14.

When soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

The guidance on the use of face-masks may be revised as more information is known.

- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** When possible, stay at least 6 feet away from someone who is coughing and sneezing.

If close contact cannot be avoided (for example, you are caring for a sick person at home), consider wearing a respirator (a facepiece designed to protect you from breathing in very small particles, which might contain viruses). Respirators fit tightly to the face so that most air is inhaled through the filtered material. Respirator devices with the numbers N95 or above have been shown to be most effective.

- **Stay home when you are sick.** This will help prevent others from catching your illness. Consider wearing a facemask if you are sick with the flu and need to have close contact with other people.



- **Avoid crowds.** During a pandemic, avoid crowded places when possible to limit the spread of the flu. If you must go into a crowded place consider wearing a facemask while you are there, especially if you live with someone who has the flu, because you might be in the early stages of infection. If you are well and cannot avoid the crowded location, you can also wear a facemask while there.