

Lakeshore Health Notes

Manitowoc County Health Department

November/December 2018

Fight Flu This Season



Influenza (also known as the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. Flu is different from a cold, and usually comes on suddenly. Each year flu viruses cause millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospital stays and tens of thousands of deaths in the United States.

Flu is spread mainly by droplets made when someone with flu coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets can land in the mouth or noses of people nearby. A person can also get the flu by touching something that has flu virus on it and then touching their mouth, eye, or nose.

Flu is a potentially serious and contagious disease. It can cause mild to severe illness. Flu symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Serious complications of flu can lead to hospitalization and even death. The CDC recommends a **three-step approach** to fight flu:

1. **Get a flu vaccine:** CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu and its potentially serious complications. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every year.
2. **Stop the Germs:** Below are everyday preventive actions you can take to stop the spread of germs.

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
 - While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
 - If you are sick with flu-like symptoms, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone for 24 hours without the use of a fever-reducing medicine).
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. After using a tissue, throw it in the trash and wash your hands.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth as germs spread this way.
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like flu.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
3. **Antiviral Drugs:** Take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor prescribes them for you.
 - If you get sick with flu, antiviral drugs can be used to treat your illness. Antiviral drugs are different from antibiotics.
 - Antiviral drugs can make illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications.
 - CDC recommends prompt antiviral treatment of people who are severely ill and people who are at high risk of serious flu complications.
 - Follow your doctor's instructions for taking this medicine.

The flu season is here. You can help protect yourself and your loved ones by following the steps above. Talk to your health care provider about getting a flu shot today. For more information on the flu and/or the flu vaccine visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

Steps to Avoid Food Poisoning

Food illness is common, costly and preventable. The CDC estimates that 1 in 6 Americans get sick from eating contaminated food every year. You can get food poisoning after swallowing food that has been contaminated with a variety of germs (bacteria, viruses, parasites) or toxin substances.

With the holiday season around the corner we all know this is a time for big family gatherings and for holiday meals. Learn the **four steps** to protect you and your loved ones from food poisoning.

Clean: Wash hands with soap and water before, during, and after preparing food and before eating. Wash utensils & cutting boards in hot, soapy water.

Separate: Don't cross-contaminate.

Use separate cutting boards and plates for raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Keep raw and cooked food separate.

Cook: Cook food to the right temperature.

Use a food thermometer to ensure foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature.

Chill: Refrigerate promptly.

Refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours. Thaw frozen food safely in the refrigerator/microwave.



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