



## Say No to Infection Influenza Fact Sheet

### What is Influenza?

Influenza (**Flu for short**) is an infectious and common viral illness that is spread by coughs and sneezes. It's very different from the common cold as symptoms tend to be more severe and last longer. Flu tends to be more common in the winter months (seasonal flu) but it is a viral infection that can be caught at any time of the year.

In the UK approximately 600 people a year will die as a complication of seasonal flu. Most vulnerable groups include: the elderly, those with weakened immune systems or long-term health condition's i.e., asthmatics, diabetics, pregnant women, and young children.

**The median incubation period of influenza is 2 days (range 1 to 4 days).**

**Period of infectiousness:** For influenza it is generally assumed that the period of infectiousness (i.e., communicability) starts 1 day before the onset of symptoms until 3 – 5 days later.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms begin within 2-3 days of becoming infected and peak after 2 or 3 days. Tiredness may last much longer.

**The most common symptoms are:**

- High temperature >38 or above
- Headache
- General aches and pains
- Tiredness/exhaustion
- Sore Throat
- Loss of appetite
- Dry cough

### How does it spread?

The flu virus is spread by small droplets that contain the virus which are coughed or sneezed into the air by an infected person. It can also be passed on by coughing and sneezing into tissues or hands and failing to wash hands after disposal. Similarly, if an infected person touches hard surfaces with unwashed hands, the virus can be picked up by another person from these hard surfaces particularly if they touch their eyes nose or mouth.

People can be infectious 24 hours prior to onset of first symptoms and can be infectious for a further 5 days. Children and people with a weakened immune system may be infectious for longer.

## What can care managers do to protect staff & residents?

Isolate any symptomatic residents/contacts for 5 days (please follow the SNTI action card).

- Careful hygiene.
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing – ‘Catch it, bin it, kill it’
- Cleaning of surfaces, frequently touched surfaces including touch points, door handles, telephones etc.
- Promote vaccination for residents/staff,

When antivirals need to be prescribed, UKHSA will contact South Warwickshire GP Federation (in hours, Mon -Fri, 8-5pm) or GP out of hours (weekends and bank holidays). Please refer to the Coventry & Warwickshire non COVID 19 respiratory virus outbreak pathway for care homes for further information.

[Please click on the link for further information on Respiratory Infections to also include Covid 19.](#)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/acute-respiratory-disease-managing-outbreaks-in-care-homes>

[Flu - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

### **Additional Information**

[Please click on the link for Adult Social Care Covid 19 guidance.](#)