



## Influenza-like Illness

### Patient Information Fact Sheet

#### PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CAREFULLY

**It contains important details on how to manage your condition after the ambulance has departed.**

A paramedic has assessed you and determined that you are most likely suffering from a viral respiratory infection. An influenza virus (the flu) is likely, but most respiratory infections share similar symptoms.

Following consultation and discussion with the paramedic, you have agreed to seek non-emergency department care. Below is information about influenza (flu):

#### WHAT IS THE FLU?

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Most people will recover after one to two weeks from the onset of symptoms, however a very small number of people can develop potentially life threatening complications and will need treatment at hospital. Influenza is different from the common cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly. For more information: [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)

#### WHAT ARE THE COMMON SYMPTOMS OF THE FLU?

- fever and chills
- cough, sore throat and runny or stuffy nose
- muscle aches, joint pains, headaches and fatigue
- nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea (more common in children than adults).

#### HOW IS THE FLU SPREAD?

- by droplets from an infected person's coughing or sneezing, or by touching surfaces where infected droplets have landed
- adults with influenza are infectious from the day before their symptoms start until five to seven days later
- young children and people with weakened immune systems may be infectious for longer.

#### HOW CAN I PREVENT THE SPREAD OF FLU?

- cover your face when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues in a rubbish bin
- wash your hands thoroughly and often with soap and water or alcohol hand gel for at least 10 seconds, especially after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
- stay at home until you are well, waiting at least 24 hours after fever has resolved to reduce the risk of spreading the virus

#### WHAT SHOULD I DO TO MANAGE MY FLU?

- bed rest
- drink plenty of fluids
- take pain relief for muscle/joint aches and pains as directed
- talk to your pharmacist about other over the counter medications to manage symptoms
- children under 16 years of age should not be given aspirin-containing medications for the flu.

#### WHEN TO SEEK FURTHER CARE?

Seek medical advice if the flu worsens over time or if any of the following occurs:

- shortness of breath or rapid breathing
- chest pain
- confusion or sudden dizziness
- persistent vomiting.

**People who are at risk of getting flu or having severe outcomes from flu are strongly encouraged to discuss annual influenza vaccination with their doctor.**

#### REMEMBER

If your symptoms or pain change or increase or your condition deteriorates, contact your doctor or healthdirect on 1800 022 222 for health information and advice.

In a life threatening emergency call Triple Zero (000) immediately.

#### DISCLAIMER

This information is to be used as educational purposes only. Please consult your doctor or other health care professional for specific information regarding your condition.