

# HOW TO FIGHT THE FLU

You can play an active role in staying healthy and preventing the spread of the seasonal flu if you:

- » Get your flu shot.
- » Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- » Cough and sneeze into your arm, not your hand.
- » Keep common surface areas clean and disinfected. Regularly cleaning and disinfecting these surfaces with normal household disinfectants can help prevent the spread of viruses.
- » Stay home If you get sick, ; if you think you have the flu and are otherwise healthy, you should stay home from school or work until you are feeling well and able to fully participate in regular activities. If your symptoms get worse, call your health care provider.
- » Eat healthy foods and be physically active to keep your immune system strong.
- » Although the Public Health Agency of Canada recommends that everyone older than six months get the flu shot, it is especially important for people who are at higher risk of complications from influenza.

Source: Public Health Agency of Canada



## SEASONAL FLU



### CONTACT US

**Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority**  
PO Box 787  
Prince Albert, SK S6V 5S4

**Street Address:**

Chief Joseph Custer I.R. #201  
Peter Ballantyne Office Complex  
Main Floor, 2300 - 10th Avenue West  
Prince Albert. SK S6V 6Z1

**Phone:** 306 953 5000  
**Conf. Fax:** 306 953 5020



## A Viral Infection SEASONAL FLU

NITHA's Vision:

Partner communities will achieve improved quality health and well-being, with community members empowered to be responsible for their health.





## WHAT IS THE SEASONAL FLU?

Seasonal influenza (flu) is a common and highly contagious respiratory infection that affects the nose, throat and lungs.

In Canada, flu season usually runs from November to April.

Most people will recover from influenza within a week or ten days, but some - including those over 65 and adults and children with chronic conditions, such as diabetes and cancer - are at greater risk of more severe complications, such as pneumonia.

Approximately 3,500 Canadians can die from influenza and its Complications annually, depending on the season.

## HOW IT SPREADS

The influenza virus spreads by respiratory droplets spread by infected persons through coughing, sneezing or talking.

Spread can also occur through direct contact with objects contaminated by the influenza virus, such as toys, eating utensils, and unwashed hands.

## SYMPTOMS OF THE FLU

- » Influenza usually starts with the sudden onset of a headache, sore throat and muscle aches.
- » The onset is often abrupt enough that people can remember precisely when it started.
- » Most people recover from the flu in about a week.

## COMPLICATIONS FROM THE FLU

- » Most people recover from the flu within a week to 10 days; some people develop complications like bronchitis, pneumonia, kidney failure or heart failure., which can all be severe.
- » One common complication is a bacterial infection of the upper and/or lower respiratory tract. Symptoms of a bacterial infection include lack of improvement in a person's condition after 3-5 days, and blood or mucous coming up when the person coughs.
- » Adults and children who suffer from cardiac or pulmonary disorders (e.g. asthma, cystic fibrosis) may see their chronic condition worsen.
- » Young children are susceptible to complications. Symptoms of complications may include: difficulty breathing, sudden paleness, fever or low temperature, inability to drink or breastfeed, vomiting more than 2-3 times in 24 hours, a stiff neck, lethargy or confusion, and convulsions or seizures.
- » Pregnant women may develop pneumonia and may require hospitalization.
- » Elderly people (65 years and older) have the highest rate of hospitalization and death from the flu. Common complications for seniors include bacterial infection and pneumonia.

### **If you develop the following symptoms, you should see a healthcare provider right away:**

- » Shortness of breath, rapid or difficulty breathing
- » Chest pain
- » Bluish or grey skin color
- » Bloody or coloured mucus/spit
- » Sudden dizziness or confusion
- » Severe or persistent vomiting
- » High fever lasting more than three days
- » Low blood pressure

### **Additional symptoms to watch for in children include:**

- » Not drinking enough fluids or eating
- » Not waking up or interacting
- » Irritability (not wanting to play or be held)