

Influenza Disease and Prevention
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Oregon Public Health Immunization Program

Influenza

Influenza is a seasonal disease caused by the Orthomyxoviridus virus. Influenza is spread by airborne droplets and contaminated surfaces and is highly contagious, even before the person knows they are sick.

Each year, between 5-20% of the worldwide population will become ill with influenza. In America, influenza and its complications cause an annual average of 36,000 deaths and 226,000 hospitalizations, as well as countless hours of missed work, medical expenses, and will often lead to secondary infections such as pneumococcal pneumonia, sinus infections, and ear infections. Influenza can also interfere with the insulin cycle of persons with Diabetes.

While deaths and hospitalizations for influenza and influenza-related complications tend to occur in the frail: babies, the elderly, and persons with low immune systems-- the majority of influenza transmissions come from young, healthy, unvaccinated children and adults. To complicate the issue, some healthy persons can be infected, and contagious, but have no symptoms.

This site has been created to help guide your efforts to prevent and control the impact of influenza on your community. Included are links to other agencies working towards the same goal of reducing the burden of influenza disease. If you have resources to share, or know of an agency we should include on our site, please contact the Oregon Immunization Program at 971-673-0472.

Influenza Prevention

Prevention of influenza requires a two-pronged attack:

1. Reduce transmission of the virus
 - Frequent hand washing
 - Cover sneezes and coughs
 - Stay home when you're sick
 - Clean work and household surfaces often
 - Wear a mask if you have a compromised immune system
 - Ask your family, friends, and health providers to get a flu vaccination
2. Reduce susceptibility to the virus
 - Get an annual influenza vaccination
 - Get plenty of sleep
 - Exercise and eat well
 - Manage any chronic conditions