

Influenza

Symptoms and signs of Influenza:

- Fever-often a high fever of more than 102 degrees Fahrenheit (38.9 Celsius)
- Headache
- Body aches and pains
- Fatigue
- Cough
- Pleuritic chest pain (pain when you take a breath)
- Gastrointestinal symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, are rare in adults with influenza. What is sometimes called "stomach flu" is actually not caused by the flu virus. The medical term for that common condition is gastroenteritis.

Flu Vs Colds:

Colds are also viral infections but are usually self-limited and not life-threatening. Colds usually cause a stuffy or runny nose, sore throat, mild cough, and sometimes mild fever.

Treating Influenza:

Because influenza is a viral infection, it cannot be treated with antibacterial antibiotics. Several antiviral prescription medications are available that may help to treat influenza. These medications work best if they are taken early in the course of the flu. They may help to decrease the length of symptoms of influenza. These drugs cause some adverse effects, and persons with some chronic medical problems should not take them nor should pregnant women. They are not recommended for children younger than 1 year. Medications for pain and fever may also be helpful in relieving flu symptoms.

Preventing Influenza:

Receiving flu vaccine each autumn (ideally in October or November) is the best way to prevent influenza. Yearly vaccinations against influenza are recommended particularly for everyone aged 65 years and older, pregnant women, individuals with chronic medical problems (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), children 6-23 months, and older children who have chronic medical conditions or who are on chronic aspirin therapy. Children 8 years and younger receiving the flu vaccine for the first time should receive 2 doses given about 30 days apart.

The flu shot is made from inactivated influenza virus and cannot give you the flu. Because influenza virus strains differ from year to year, the influenza vaccine also varies each year. A nasal spray flu vaccine is available for healthy persons aged 5 through 49 years who are not pregnant.

Make an appointment with Dr. Rheuark at (310) 373-8777.