



Information Sheets for Parents – *Health Fact Sheet*

Influenza

National Quality Standard – Quality Area 2

Element 2.1.2 – Health Practices and Procedures – Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

Description:

Influenza ('the flu') is a viral disease of the respiratory tract, characterised by fever, chills, headache, muscle aches and pains, a head cold and a mild sore throat. It can often cause a severe cough. The infected person usually recovers within 2–7 days

How does it spread?

Influenza is very infectious. It can spread through the air by coughing and sneezing, as well as by hands, cups and other objects that have been in contact with an infected person's mouth or nose

Incubation period:

The incubation period is about 1–3 days.

Infectious period:

For young children, the infectious period is 7–10 days

Exclusion period:

People with influenza should stay at home until they are feeling well

Responsibilities of parents:

- Keep the child at home until they are feeling well.
- Encourage cough and sneeze etiquette and effective hand hygiene at home.

Controlling the spread of infection:

- Annual vaccination is available against influenza. People need to be vaccinated every year because immunity decreases, and new influenza strains circulate each year
- Teach children about cough and sneeze etiquette. – Cough or sneeze into your inner elbow rather than your hand. – If you used a tissue to cover your nose or mouth when sneezing or coughing, put the tissue in the bin straight away. – Clean your hands.
- Ensure that appropriate cleaning practices are being followed.

Treatment:

There is no specific treatment for the influenza. Because it's caused by a virus, antibiotics will not help treat influenza. However, antibiotics may be prescribed if the person has a secondary infection or complication that is caused by bacteria. Decongestants and other cold remedies are widely promoted for relieving the symptoms of colds, but they are unlikely to help. In fact, they can cause side effects such as irritability, confusion and sleepiness. Oral decongestants are not recommended for children under the age of 2 years. Cough medicines do not reduce the frequency, severity or duration of a cough. The cough is there for a reason: it serves a useful function in clearing mucus from the child's airways and preventing secondary infection. If you are concerned, take the child to a doctor. Do not give aspirin to any child under the age of 12 years unless specifically recommended by a doctor

For further information: [Staying Healthy in Child Care](#)