As the holiday season is rapidly approaching, so too is the annual cold and flu season. Now that the school year is well underway and families are beginning to come together for the holidays, the spread of common illness is increasing throughout our community. For most people, cold and flu season is just a nuisance, but for high-risk individuals, influenza and the common cold can cause severe complications. Prevention and proper management of seasonal illness is key to slowing the spread of the disease, and staying healthy through the holiday season.

ONU HealthWise remains committed to promoting the health and wellness to all in our community during this contagious time of year. In our December edition of the newsletter we will discuss how to properly identify and manage cold and flu symptoms at home and the steps we can take to prevent the illness from reaching our families and ourselves.

Happy Holidays!
Charles Christie, Kyla Hemphill, Cody Lovejoy, and Sarah Pelger
Is it a Cold or the Flu?

It has begun. We are now in the middle of the “flu” season. The “flu” season is typically thought to begin with the onset of fall and run through the end of winter, with a peak in the number of people developing the “flu” between November and March. The “flu” can be very difficult to understand at times as there are a number of misconceptions about what the “flu” actually is and how it affects the body.

The “flu” can commonly be mistaken for the common cold as there are many similarities between a cold and influenza, although there are distinct differences between them as well.

Later in the newsletter, ways to manage the cold and flu will be discussed as well as how to prevent them.

### Stomach Flu: In and Out

The stomach flu also known as gastroenteritis is commonly mistaken for the flu. It has some of the similar symptoms in terms of fatigue, but it is different in that it causes severe nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. The stomach flu tends to occur 1-3 days after being exposed to the virus, similar the flu. Yet, the stomach flu lasts a much shorter time in comparison to the flu, 1-2 days versus potentially several weeks respectively. The stomach flu is managed similar to the flu. It is handled by managing the patient’s symptoms. The main concern with gastroenteritis is dehydration due to a person not taking in much fluid, combined with the amount of water lost from vomiting and diarrhea. It is important to keep the person well hydrated. Oral rehydration solution, such as Pedialyte, is best in these situations as it lacks a high sugar content, which is common in sports drinks, which can worsen diarrhea.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Cold</th>
<th>Influenza “Flu”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cause</strong></td>
<td>Rhinovirus or Coronavirus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Onset</strong></td>
<td>1-3 days (usually within 48 hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symptoms</strong></td>
<td>Sore throat Low-Grade Fever Runny nose Congestion Mild Coughing Mild Fatigue Sluggish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>Up to 10 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treatment</strong></td>
<td>Supportive Care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**For More Information:**


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Available from: https://amysrecipefordisaster.wordpress.com/category/troubled-tummy/
Hygiene to Help Prevent Cold & Flu

The flu and cold can spread from person to person. Having good hygiene is an important part of helping prevent the spread of germs and sickness. Here are some hygiene tips to help prevent the spread of a cold and flu.

- **Wash your hands frequently.** Always use soap and water. You should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds which is about equal to singing “Happy Birthday” twice. Wash your hands more than usual each day during cold and flu season.

- **Disinfect surfaces that are commonly touched.** Surfaces such as doorknobs and countertops can commonly have germs. Using either an alcohol based wipe or cleaner, clean and disinfect commonly touched areas.

- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.** Germs are often spread when you touch something and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. To prevent the spread of germs, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

- **Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.** When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth with a tissue. If there isn’t a tissue available, cough or sneeze into your elbow. This will help prevent you from spreading your germs by preventing transfer of any germs to your hands. Don’t forget to wash your hands afterwards!

- **Avoid close contact.** Avoid contact with people who are sick to help prevent you from also getting sick. If you are sick, also try to avoid being in groups of people.

- **Practice other good health habits.** You should drink plenty of water to stay hydrated and eat nutritious food. Make sure you get plenty of sleep and manage your stress. These small things will help you stay healthy.

FAQ’s About the Flu Shot

**Q:** Who should get the flu vaccine?

**A:** Everyone that is 6 months and older should get the flu shot. There are many different types of vaccines available so not everyone will get the same flu shot. Depending on your age, it will determine which type of flu shot you get. The more people that get the flu shot, the more protection it offers the community against the flu and will help protect people that cannot get vaccinated. Even if you have an egg allergy, it is recommended that you still receive the flu shot.

**Q:** Why do I need to get the vaccine every year?

**A:** The virus changes from year to year and the flu shot is often updated. The body’s response to the vaccination also decreases throughout the year. Therefore, it is important that you get a flu shot every year.

**Q:** When should I get the vaccine?

**A:** If possible, get the flu shot by October. If you haven’t gotten it this year yet, you’re not too late! As long as the virus is around, vaccines can still be given now and even into January or later.

**Q:** Can I get the flu from the flu shot?

**A:** The simple answer is no. However, there is a possibility that you can still get the flu even if you are vaccinated depending on a variety of factors such as your age and health status.

**Q:** How long does the flu shot take to work?

**A:** It takes about 2 weeks after you get the flu shot for your body to provide the protection against the flu.

**Q:** What are some common side effects from the flu shot?

**A:** Common side effects from the flu shot include soreness, redness, and/or swelling at the site where the shot was given, a low fever, and potentially some aches.

**Q:** Where can I get a flu shot?

**A:** The flu shot is offered at quite a few places including pharmacies, health clinics, and doctor’s offices. Call today to get your flu shot if you haven’t done so.
COLD AND FLU MANAGEMENT

The treatment plan for cold and flu is typically symptomatic in nature. Different classes of over-the-counter medications are commonly used to manage symptoms like congestion, fever, cough, sore throat, and post-nasal drip. Prescription antiviral medications are typically reserved for suspected and confirmed cases of influenza.

Who should be treated with antivirals?

- Patients who started experiencing symptoms within 48 hours
- High-risk patients with confirmed or suspected cases of the flu
- Patients with severe symptoms requiring hospitalization

Prescription Influenza treatment

There are several prescription medications that are currently approved for the treatment of influenza virus; however, rapid shifts in the genetic make-up of the virus have left many antivirals ineffective due to the development of resistance. Currently, Tamiflu (oseltamivir) and Relenza (zanamivir) are the recommended first-line antivirals for the treatment of confirmed or suspected cases of influenza. Both medications are effective against influenza A and B viruses for shortening the duration of the illness and the severity of symptoms. According to clinical trials, Tamiflu and Relenza reduce the time to return to normal health by an average of 2-3 days. Other prescription medications are not currently recommended for the treatment of influenza due to resistance patterns rendering them ineffective 80 percent of the time.

Prescription Antivirals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tamiflu (oseltamivir)</th>
<th>Relenza (zanamivir)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directions</td>
<td>Take 1 tablet 2 times daily for 5 days</td>
<td>Take 2 inhalations 2 times daily for 5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Effects</td>
<td>Headache, Nausea and vomiting, Signs of allergic reaction</td>
<td>Headache, Nausea and vomiting, Cough and sore throat, Nasal irritation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Information</td>
<td>Take with or without food, Can be used preventatively in high risk patients, Does not treat the common cold, Approved for children &gt;1 year old</td>
<td>This product uses an inhaler as delivery system, Can be used preventatively in high risk patients, Does not treat the common cold, Approved for children &gt;7 years old, Avoid this antiviral if you have asthma or COPD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-pharmacologic Treatment

- Adequate rest and hydration
- Cold water vaporizer or humidifier
- Saline nasal sprays
- Cold/warm compresses

Antibiotic Resistance

Antibiotics are critical to treating and saving many patients with infections. Unfortunately, overuse of these drugs can promote bacterial resistance, or the ability of an organism to survive the effects of a medication previously used to treat them. Resistance occurs naturally over time as bacterial species are repeatedly exposed to antibiotics. In order to maintain the effectiveness of our medications it is important to limit their use only to patients who truly need them. According to the CDC, over half of all outpatient antibiotic prescriptions may be inappropriate, and most of these cases are acute respiratory infections. Most upper respiratory infections are viral in nature and can only be treated symptomatically. Concerns for meeting patient expectations drives physicians to prescribe antibiotics when they may not be necessary. Patients should be aware that their illness may be viral, and should not expect a prescription for every illness.
Over the Counter (OTC) Products

There are many products that can be purchased from your local pharmacy to help with your cold and flu symptoms. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to help you find the best OTC for you!

Always be sure to tell your doctor when you are starting any new medications, including OTCs and herbal medications.

Decongestants:
Uses: nasal congestion, cough with postnasal drip
Products: pseudoephedrine, phenylephrine (oral); oxymetazoline (nasal)
Other Info: Use with caution if you have high blood pressure or other heart issues, or try an alternative like Coricidin HBP

Antihistamines:
Uses: runny nose and sneezing
Products: diphenhydramine, chlorpheniramine
Other Info: Should be used in combination with a decongestant

Local anesthetics:
Uses: sore throat
Products: benzocaine lozenges, throat sprays, lollipops
Other Info: Not for use in children <2 years old; can be used every 2-4 hours

Analgesics:
Uses: aches or fever
Products: aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, naproxen
Other Info: Avoid using aspirin in children; watch maximum dosing recommendations

Suppressants:
Uses: nonproductive coughs
Products: dextromethorphan, codeine
Other Uses: Only use if cough is dry and there is no mucous or phlegm

Expectorants:
Uses: productive coughs
Products: guaifenesin
Other Info: Helps loosen mucous to make coughs more productive and remove excess secretions
Resources for Making Healthy Transitions in Life

By Chaplain David E. MacDonald, D.Min.

With a new year will inevitably come new resolutions: lose weight, eat healthier, quit smoking, pray more, etc. Changing seasons in our lives can also bring about transitions in relationships, jobs, and personal or professional interests. Managing these transitions can be difficult, and should probably not be undertaken lightly or without some guidance. That is why I often recommend spiritual direction as one tool to help people who are undergoing a transition in their lives. Spiritual direction involves meeting with a spiritual director/guide/mentor/friend—someone with whom one can share one’s inner thoughts and feelings. Unlike counseling, which focuses primarily on mental and emotional health, spiritual direction focuses on spiritual health. After listening to a directee, a spiritual director might recommend certain spiritual disciplines or practices that might be helpful, including journal-keeping, silent prayer or meditation, a spiritual retreat, or participation in a faith community.

One resource that I recommend for those who are undergoing transitional periods of their lives is Discerning Life Transitions, by Dwight Judy, Ph.D. Dr. Judy was my doctoral dissertation advisor, and is an experienced spiritual director and scholar in the field of transpersonal psychology. In this book, Judy outlines several helpful steps that can be utilized while one is discerning a new direction in one’s life. Some of the helpful hints include:

• Be aware of how personal crises can bring up unresolved discernment issues.
• Recognize that personal discernment must be tempered with regard to the needs of family and finances.
• Know that both personal achievement and family life should be balanced in order for a transition to happen smoothly.
• Realize that adult life-stage development is cyclical, filled with periods of stability, followed by instability, followed by stability, etc.
• Practice the discipline of clearing away “dead wood” from your life, in order to make room for new experiences and transitions.
• Acknowledge places where you need to seek forgiveness, and persons you may need to forgive, in order for you to be able to move on.

Discerning Life Transitions is a helpful resource for anyone who is undergoing a personal transition, or is part of a communal transition such as a change in the family or the immediate community. Each chapter includes helpful advice, as well as questions and suggested activities for the discerner, which aid in making transitions as healthy and helpful as possible. If you are in the midst of a transition right now, I would encourage you to pick this book up, and know that as the university chaplain, I am always available to help ONU community members with issues such as discernment of transitions. You can always call my office at (419) 772-2200 to set up an appointment.