Influenza viruses

Flu (influenza) is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs, which are part of the respiratory system. Influenza is commonly called the flu, but it's not the same as stomach "flu" viruses that cause diarrhea and vomiting.

Influenza viruses are constantly changing, with new strains appearing regularly. If you've had influenza in the past, your body has already made antibodies to fight that specific strain of the virus.

nfluenza viruses travel through the air in droplets when someone with the infection coughs, sneezes or talks. You can inhale the droplets directly. Or you can pick up the germs from an object — such as a telephone or computer keyboard — and then transfer them to your eyes, nose or mouth.

Most people with the flu get better on their own. But sometimes, influenza and its complications can be deadly. People at higher risk of developing flu complications include:

1. Young children under age 2
2. Adults older than age 65
3. People who are pregnant or plan to be pregnant during flu season
4. People with weakened immune systems
5. People who have chronic illnesses, such as asthma, heart disease, kidney disease, liver disease and diabetes
6. People with a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or higher

Symptoms

1. Fever
2. Aching muscles
3. Chills and sweats
4. Headache
5. Dry cough
6. Shortness of breath
7. Tiredness and weakness
8. Runny or stuffy nose

9. Sore throat
10. Eye pain
11. Vomiting and diarrhea

There are four types of influenza virus, termed influenza viruses A, B, C, and D. Aquatic birds are the primary source of Influenza A virus (IAV), which is also widespread in various mammals, including humans and pigs. Influenza B virus (IBV) and Influenza C virus (ICV) primarily infect humans, and Influenza D virus (IDV) is found in cattle and pigs. IAV and IBV circulate in humans and cause seasonal epidemics, and ICV causes a mild infection, primarily in children. IDV can infect humans but is not known to cause illness.

Types of virus

Influenza A virus (IAV), genus Alphainfluenzavirus
Influenza B virus (IBV), genus Betainfluenzavirus
Influenza C virus (ICV), genus Gammainfluenzavirus
Influenza D virus (IDV), genus Deltainfluenzavirus