Influenza ("The Flu")

The influenza virus, or "the flu", is more serious than the common cold virus, so it is wise to do everything you can to prevent it. A flu shot is your best defense. The CDC states that "the recommendation to **not** use the nasal spray flu vaccine (LAIV) was renewed for the 2017-2018 season. **Only injectable flu shots are recommended for use again this season.**" The vaccine is safe, won't make you sick, and generally has few side effects.

**How to Prevent the Flu:**
- Get the vaccine! It’s not too late. Even if this season's flu shot is less effective than years past, it will lessen your symptoms, if you do get the flu.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub, frequently!
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school (especially when someone is ill).
- Avoid close contact with people that are sick.
- Get plenty of rest and be physically active.
- Drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.

**Flu symptoms:**
- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

* It is important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

**When You Have the Flu (you CAN still get the flu even if you've received the vaccine):**
- Per the CDC, most people with the flu have mild illness. If, however, you have symptoms of flu and are in a high risk group** or are very sick or worried about your illness, contact your health care provider.
- Tamiflu is a prescription antiviral medication that must be administered within the first 48 hours of symptoms to be most effective. Tamiflu can shorten the duration of the flu by 1 or 2 days. It can also prevent serious complications from flu.
- **STAY HOME** – this helps prevent spreading the illness to others. An older person or someone in poor health or with respiratory disease can die from the flu that you pass on to them.
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub, frequently!
- Drink TONS of fluids! Hot liquids and soups may be helpful. Try to maintain nutritious intake. Milk products may thicken mucus and worsen coughs.
- **Stay home for at least 24 hours** after your fever has disappeared without the use of fever-reducing medication, such as Tylenol or Advil.

**High Risk Group:** children age 5 and under, adults age 65 and older, pregnant women, residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives.

**References:**
- [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/treatment/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/treatment/index.html) Last Edited: January 24, 2018
- [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/takingcare.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/takingcare.htm) Last Edited: January 24, 2018
- [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm) Last Edited: January 23, 2018