When to Seek Medical Attention When You Have the Flu

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BURLINGTON – If you have symptoms of flu and are at increased risk for complications (young children, people 65 and older, pregnant women and people with certain medical conditions such as asthma), contact your doctor or health care provider.

Flu symptoms include fever, headache, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and body aches. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea can occur but are more common among children than adults.

“A health care provider can determine whether influenza testing and treatment are needed and your doctor may prescribe antiviral drugs,” said Patsy Kelso, state epidemiologist for infectious disease. “These drugs can make you better faster and may also prevent serious complications, especially if they are started within two days of getting sick.”

Flu symptoms can vary from mild to severe. If you get sick with flu symptoms, stay home from work or school and avoid contact with other people. Rest, drink plenty of fluids, and cover your mouth every time you cough or sneeze.

Flu viruses spread mainly through droplets through the air when people cough or sneeze. You can also get the flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching your own mouth, eyes or nose.

Actions that everyone can take to stay healthy and keep illness from spreading:

- Wash your hands often and well with soap and water.
- Cover your cough.
- Use a hand sanitizer if soap and water is not available.
- Keep hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home from work, school or public places when you’re sick.

For questions about the flu, visit the Health Department’s website at healthvermont.gov.

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