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Influenza activity is now widespread across our community. Influenza is a highly contagious viral respiratory disease that can cause mild to severe illness and, in some cases, can lead to death. Influenza viruses are spread through person to person contact or through contaminated surfaces. Symptoms of the flu include fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

The Springdale Health Department urges residents to be aware of influenza and to take steps to prevent its spread. Older adults are at a higher risk for influenza and severe influenza related complications. Influenza can be particularly dangerous for seniors with chronic health conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease.

- **Get a flu shot.** Ask about special high-dose vaccines specifically for older adults.
- **Maintain good health habits.** Get plenty of sleep, manage stress and be physically active. Drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritional foods.
- **Wash your hands** with soap and warm water for 20 seconds to kill flu viruses. When you can't wash your hands, use a hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands.
- **Limit your contact.** Avoid contact with people who may be ill with the influenza, as well as potentially contaminated surfaces. If you have the influenza, limit the time you spend with others until you are fever-free for at least 24 hours. Avoid nursing homes and senior centers while experiencing flu-like symptoms.
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away immediately and wash your hands. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow.

If you get the flu, stay at home and get plenty of rest. Drink plenty of liquids to replace fluids lost through fever and sweating. Talk to your medical provider about medicines you can take to manage your symptoms and how they may interact with other medicines you take.

Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm> for additional information and resources to help you fight the flu.