



WHAT IS **INFLUENZA?**

Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is a respiratory infection caused by a virus.



IS **INFLUENZA** SERIOUS?

Yes. Influenza can keep you in bed for several days and prevent you from carrying out your daily activities. It may lead to more serious consequences, such as pneumonia that requires hospitalization, and may even be fatal. These complications are more likely to occur in vulnerable individuals because of their age or because they have a chronic medical condition.

Beware! Do not confuse influenza with more common respiratory infections such as colds, which are only a minor inconvenience.

www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/influenza



INFLUENZA **IS NOT A GAME**

Free influenza vaccination campaign
for people 60 years and over, and other
people at risk



Photo: CDC

VACCINATION

AN ESSENTIAL ALLY

Vaccination remains the most effective protection against influenza.

Contrary to popular belief, the vaccine does not contain any living viruses. It is therefore safe and cannot transmit the flu. People who believe that vaccination gave them the flu are probably confusing their symptoms with those resulting from a cold or an infection caused by another virus.

It is important to be vaccinated every year because the viruses that cause influenza change. The contents of the vaccine are therefore adapted to the viruses currently in circulation.

Vaccination is free for people with a high risk of complications, such as seniors 60 years and older, very young children and people with chronic illnesses, as well as those who come into regular contact with these individuals. Ask a healthcare professional whether you have a high risk of complications.

If you are 65 or older, or if you have a chronic illness, you can also be vaccinated for free against pneumococcal infections. Pneumococcal vaccination is usually given only once in a lifetime.



HAND HYGIENE

SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE

Hand washing is an effective way to reduce the spread of infection. However, this simple measure is too often neglected. Wash your hands often with ordinary soap and water (antibacterial soap is not necessary).

How to wash your hands effectively:

- **Wet your hands.**
- **Apply soap.**
- **Rub your hands together vigorously for 15 to 20 seconds.**
- **Wash all hand surfaces, including between your fingers and under your nails.**
- **Rinse under running water.**
- **Dry your hands with a paper towel or a clean towel.**
- **Use the paper towel or the towel to turn off the faucets.**

If a sink and running water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub (waterless cleaner) to clean your hands. Choose a product that contains at least 60% alcohol.



RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

A RESPONSIBLE GESTURE

- **Cover your mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Wash your hands immediately after. If you do not have a tissue, cough into the crook of your elbow or against your inner upper arm, as these are parts of the body that do not come into contact with other people or objects.**
- **Dispose of used tissues in a garbage bag, in a closed waste receptacle.**
- **Avoid visiting seniors or people who suffer from a chronic illness if you are sick.**

These basic hygiene measures are good for everyone—anytime and anywhere. Adopt them!