

# INFLUENZA (FLU)-Fact Sheet

## **What is Influenza?**

Influenza is a virus that affects the nose, throat, and lungs, giving most people mild cold-like symptoms. Influenza is most common in the fall and winter months. Symptoms can start 1 to 3 days after you are exposed. You can spread the virus even before you feel sick.

## **How does Influenza spread?**

Influenza spreads easily from person to person from droplets. It can spread when someone coughs or sneezes near you, you touch droplets from a cough or sneeze, and you touch surfaces with the virus and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Influenza can live on surfaces like bed rails, doorknobs, tables, and medical equipment. Cleaning hands well helps stop the spread.

## **Understanding Isolation Precautions**

If you have Influenza, you will be placed on Droplet/Contact Precautions to protect others. This means you will stay in a private room; staff will wear a gown, gloves, a mask and eye protection. Visitors must check in with the nurse first, and everyone must clean their hands when entering and leaving your room. Isolation helps keep everyone safe.

## **How Does Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHS) Test for Influenza?**

A swab will be taken from your nose. The lab will test the sample for Influenza. If tests are positive, you will stay in isolation for at least 5 days from the start of your illness. When it is safe, isolation will be stopped.

## **How Can You Help?**

You can help by:

- Regularly washing your hands
- Reminding your visitors to wash their hands and wear a gown, mask, eye protection and gloves when visiting
- Following staff instructions
- Patients may be asked to remain in their room to help prevent the spread of infection. If it is necessary to leave the room for tests or procedures, hand hygiene shall be performed and a mask worn. Family members and caregivers can help support these precautions to keep everyone safe.

## **Remember:**

Having Influenza means you can spread it to others.  
We use extra precautions to prevent spreading and protect others.