



## **INFLUENZA**

### *Information Sheet for Patients and Visitors*

#### **What is Influenza – “the flu”?**

Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year.

Symptoms can include: Cough, Fever, Myalgia, Headache, Sore throat, Fatigue

Anyone can get the flu and serious problems related to flu can happen at any age. However, some people who get sick with the flu are at higher risk of complications such as those 65 years of age or older, those with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease, pregnant women, and children younger than 5 years of age.

#### **How is Influenza spread?**

Flu viruses spread mainly by tiny droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes.

#### **What special precautions are needed for Influenza?**

- You may be isolated in a room by yourself or with someone that has the same virus and a sign will be posted on the door for droplet-contact precautions
- A long-sleeved gown, gloves, mask and eye protection will be worn by everyone who cares for you including your visitors.
- All staff and visitors must clean their hands after removing this PPE when they leave the room.
- The room and the equipment used in the room will be cleaned and disinfected regularly

#### **What will happen at home?**

- You should cough into a tissue or your sleeve and clean your hands after sneezing or coughing
- You should wash your hands frequently, before eating or drinking, and after using the toilet
- Clean frequently touched surfaces daily to prevent the spread of germs to others (as the virus can live for 48 hours on surfaces)