

Influenza Virus Effects and Its Preventive Measures

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ABSTRACT

Influenza is an acute communicable disease that spreads from one individual to another. Influenza virus is also known as Flu and it is responsible for affecting Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI). Influenza virus is different from common cold and sometimes it may cause death. It spreads rapidly in seasonal epidemic conditions. It occurs every autumn and winter season. It affects all the age groups, but it is chronic in pregnant women, children under 5 months, aged persons, whose immunity is very low. This study focused on the types, signs and symptoms, complications, treatment and preventive measures of Influenza Virus.

Keywords: Influenza; Respiratory tract; Medical condition; Anti-viral drugs

TYPES

There are four categories of influenza viruses A, B, C and D. During epidemic season, human infections are caused by Influenza virus A and B.

- Influenza A viruses are divided into two sub-types based on the presence of protein on the surface of the virus, Hemagglutinin (H) and Neuraminidase (N). There are about 18 different hemagglutinin subtypes and 11 different neuraminidase subtypes. Influenza A subtypes can be further divided into different genetic clades and sub-clades which were also called as groups and sub groups.
- Influenza B viruses do not have any subtypes, but they are classified into two lineages: B/Yamagata and B/Victoria. B viruses are further divided into specific clades and sub-clades, as Influenza A viruses. Due to the presence of genetic and antigenic properties Influenza B viruses change more slowly when compared with Influenza A virus.
- Influenza C virus usually causes mild infections and does not cause any flu epidemics.
- Influenza D virus does not cause any infections in humans but mainly effects cattle's.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Flu signs and symptoms occur suddenly. People, who are sick, experiences symptoms like fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body pains, fatigue, head ache, vomiting and diarrhea etc. Most

of the people with fever and other symptoms will recover within a week without any medical treatment. But it can cause death in chronic condition.

COMPLICATIONS

Influenza is a serious medical condition. Influenza virus may lead to death in individuals with immune hypersensitivity like infants and aged people. People who are suffering with diabetes and lung infections are at high risk of this infection, it may lead to death. Complications may include secondary bacterial pneumonia, Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS), myositis, myocarditis, multi-organ failure.

TREATMENT

Consult doctor immediately if you are at high risk of serious flu symptoms. Antiviral drugs can lessen flu symptoms; they can also prevent serious flu complications, like pneumonia. People with influenza who are healthy do not need any special medication or treatments. Flu infected individual should take rest, drinking plenty of water, eating proper diet and take medicines to get relief from body pains and fever etc.

PREVENTION

One of the best preventive measures against the flu is vaccination. Some of the preventive measures include:

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Received: August 07, 2021; **Accepted:** August 21, 2021; **Published:** August 28, 2021

Citation: Gul D (2021) Influenza Virus Effects and Its Preventive. Gen Med (Los Angeles). 9:353.

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- Regularly wash your hands with soap/water.
- During symptomatic condition of flu, avoid being around people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Eat well, exercise, and take enough rest.
- Take multivitamin tablets, especially vitamin D supplements to strengthen immune system to fight against infections.