

July to September is the usual influenza season in Myanmar coinciding with the monsoon. Preparedness for coming influenza season is critical to be able to prevent, detect and timely respond. Therefore, we would like to provide the following information regarding influenza -- including simple prevention measures which will be helpful.

What is seasonal influenza?

- Influenza or "the flu" is an illness caused by seasonal influenza viruses which circulate in all parts of the world.
- These viruses spread from one person to another, through fine droplets.

Which causal pathogen?

- There are 4 types of seasonal influenza viruses, types A, B, C and D.
- Influenza A and B viruses circulate globally and cause seasonal influenza outbreaks.

What one should know about flu?

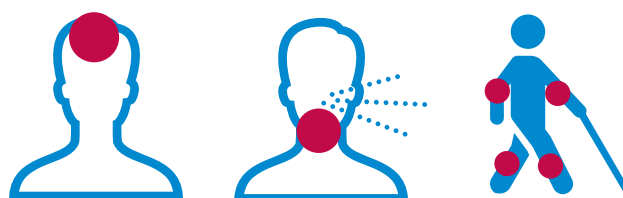
- Seasonal influenza viruses circulate worldwide and can affect people in any age group.
- The following groups are more at risk of severe disease or complications when infected;
 - pregnant women
 - children under 59 months
 - the elderly
 - individuals with chronic medical diseases
 - individuals with immunosuppressive conditions



- In temperate climates, seasonal epidemics occur mainly during winter, while in tropical regions, influenza may occur throughout the year, causing outbreaks more irregularly.
- Seasonal influenza is a serious public health problem. It can cause severe illness and death, especially in high risk populations.
- An influenza epidemic can take an economic toll, in lost productivity and strained health services.
- Antiviral drugs are available for treatment, though influenza viruses can develop resistance.

How to recognize flu?

- High fever
- Headache
- Cough (usually dry)
- Sore throat
- Muscle pain
- Time from infection to illness (incubation period) is about 2 days, but ranges from one to four days.



Seasonal influenza vaccination

- Vaccination is one of the effective ways to prevent infection and reduce the severity of flu.
- It is especially important for people at high risk of influenza complications, and for people who live with or care for the people at high risk. WHO recommends annual vaccination for:
 - pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy
 - children aged between 6 months to 5 years
 - elderly individuals (aged more than 65 years)
 - individuals with chronic medical conditions
 - health-care workers
- Influenza vaccine is most effective when circulating viruses are well-matched with viruses contained in vaccines.
- WHO globally monitors circulating flu viruses to help ensure flu vaccines are up to date.

Zoonotic influenza

- It is an illness caused by influenza viruses that infect many animals, birds and humans.
- It is difficult to differentiate seasonal and zoonotic influenza as signs and symptoms can be similar.
- However, history of exposure to poultry or pigs is a must for suspicion of zoonotic influenza.
- Whether currently-circulating avian, swine and other zoonotic influenza viruses will result in a future pandemic is unknown.
- Thus, strengthened monitoring of influenza virus in animal and human populations is essential.

How is influenza virus spreading?

- Seasonal influenza spreads easily and rapidly in crowded areas.
- It is a droplet infection, not airborne, and not highly pathogenic.
- When an infected person coughs or sneezes, droplets containing viruses (infectious droplets) are dispersed into the air and can spread up to one meter, and infect persons in close proximity who breathe these droplets in.
- The virus can also be spread by hands contaminated with influenza viruses.
- Therefore, frequent hand washing with soap and water as well as cleaning surface is key to prevention.

help prevent flu



Cover your nose and mouth by coughing or sneezing into elbow or arm. Or, use a tissue to fully cover mouth and nose, then discard used tissue well. Wash your hands with soap and water thoroughly and frequently.



Eat nutritious food and drink plenty of water



Wash your hands frequently with soap and water



Get plenty of rest and exercise mildly



Seek advice from health professionals if you have symptoms of flu

For more information please visit WHO website:
[http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-\(seasonal\)](http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-(seasonal))