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Influenza a.k.a. The Flu: Reading Comprehension

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Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is a contagious viral infection affecting the nose, throat, and lungs that is easily spread through droplets of saliva and mucus from the infected person. It can also be contracted by coming in contact with a surface where the virus is present such as computer keyboards, doorknobs, cellular phones, etc. If left to progress, the flu may lead to severe complications such as bacterial pneumonia, asthma, among others, especially in the elderly. (NHS Choices, 2015)



Types of Flu

- A – Viruses belonging to this group are responsible for infecting both animals and humans but symptoms are greatly manifested by the latter. Migratory birds are known to be the usual culprit for this. The virus varies every year and most often results in a flu outbreak like what happened in 2009 with the H1N1 pandemic.
- B – Viruses belonging to this group affect only humans. They are less severe compared with the A virus and do not escalate to the point where they cause a pandemic. However, the possibility of manifesting severe flu symptoms is still very possible.
- C – Viruses belonging to this group can only be found in humans and are less severe compared to that of types A and B. Those affected do not become very ill and sufficient rest will generally allow the body to rid itself of the flu. (Blahd, 2015)



Symptoms

A person suffering from the flu will most likely manifest a dry, hacking cough, body aches and pains, nausea, vomiting, generalized fatigue, and a sore throat. (Silvestri, L.A, 2015).

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relieve stomach upset as well as consuming bananas and rice. Antiviral drugs may be prescribed depending on the severity of the symptoms being manifested. Over-the-counter drugs do not help fight the flu virus, they simply help to treat the symptoms such as a fever or nausea. (Davis, 2015)

The Double Dose Flu Vaccine

A study included in the Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal has shed light on the importance of getting a child vaccinated with two doses in the first season they get vaccinated. There is sufficient evidence indicating that children who received two vaccine doses in their first year had a residual immunity (lasting immunity) even in subsequent seasons. The study found that children 2-8 years old had higher vaccine effectiveness (VE) after receiving a first-time double dose of the flu vaccine compared to those who had not. Therefore, the centre for disease control (CDC) recommends that children 6 months through 8 years old get two doses of flu vaccine with at least a month apart, in the first year they get vaccinated against the flu. It is believed that the first dose “primes” the immune system while the second dose provides immune protection, therefore, decreasing the likelihood of contracting the virus. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015)

Reading Comprehension Questions:

1. What parts of the body does the flu affect?
2. How is the flu spread?
3. What
4. In your opinion, which group of people is the most at risk of getting the flu?
5. What
6. Why
7. Why
8. You are a doctor and are providing a flu shot recommendation for four groups of people: Children 2-8 years old, children 9-17 years old, adults 18-50 years old and adults older than 51. What would your recommendation be for the different groups and why?

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