

## ***Influenza or Flu***

Influenza, also known as flu, is the clinical condition that results from infection with influenza viruses. The main effects of the influenza viruses are on the upper respiratory tract, the nose and throat, with possible spread and involvement of the lungs and bronchi.

The disease is highly contagious and it has potential to cause wide spread epidemics affecting sizeable portion of a population at any time. Although it is more common during winter it may strike at any time. It affects people of all ages.

### ***Symptoms***

Influenza strikes suddenly. It usually begins with a chill, fever, headache and severe muscular pains. The patient feels miserable and weak. There is an inflammation in the nose and throat, which may spread down the windpipe to the lungs, resulting in a sore throat, cough, running of the nose and eyes. In milder case of influenza the temperature rises to 102 ° F and lasts for two or three days. In severe cases, it may go upto 104 ° F and last for four or five days. The consequent weakness and fatigue may continue for several weeks. This may be followed by a deep chest cough due to irritation in the windpipe.

### ***Treatment***

Influenza, like all other acute diseases, is a natural attempt at self-cleansing and if rightly treated in a natural way, immense good can ensue so far as the future health of the patient is concerned. In the acute stage of influenza, a patient should abstain from all solid foods and only drink fruit and vegetable juices diluted with water, 50 - 50 for first three to five days, depending on the severity of the disease. The juice fast should be continued till the temperature comes down to normal. The warm water enema should be taken daily during this period to cleanse the bowels.

After fever subsides the patient may adopt an all-fruit diet for two or three days. In this regimen, the patient should take three meals a day of fresh juicy fruits such as apples, pears, grapes, oranges, pineapple, peaches and melons at five-hourly intervals. Bananas or dried, stewed or tinned fruits however, should not be taken. No other food stuff should be added to the fruit meals, otherwise the value of the treatment will be lost. This may be followed by a further two or three days on fruits and milk diet. Thereafter, the patient may adopt a well-balanced diet of three basic food groups namely, (i) seeds, nuts and grains, (ii) vegetables, and (iii) fruits. Spices and condiments, and pickles, which make food more palatal and lead to overeating, must be avoided. Lemon juice may be used in salad dressing. Alcohol, tobacco, strong tea and coffee, highly seasoned meats, over-boiled milk, pulses, potato, rice, cheese, refined, processed, stale and tinned foods should all be avoided.

Certain remedies have been found highly beneficial in the treatment of influenza. The most important of these is the use of long pepper. Half a teaspoonful of the powder of the long pepper with two teaspoonfuls of honey and half a teaspoonful of juice of ginger should be taken thrice a day. This will help greatly if taken in initial stages of the disease. It is especially useful in

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avoiding complications which follow the onset of the disease, namely, the involvement of the larynx and bronchial tube.

Another excellent remedy for influenza is the green leaves of basil or tulsi plant. About one gram of these leaves should be boiled along with some ginger in half a liter of water till about half the water is left. This decoction should be taken as tea. It gives immediate relief. Garlic and turmeric are other effective food medicines for influenza. Garlic is useful as a general antiseptic and should be given as much as the patient can bear. Garlic juice may also be sucked up the nose. A teaspoonful of turmeric powder should be mixed in a cup of warm milk and taken three times in the day. It will prevent complications arising from influenza and also activate the liver which becomes sluggish during the attack.

### ***Reference***

Shri H.K. Bakhru. (1999). Natures Cure.

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