

## Compassionate Outreach Ministries Health Team Health Tip

### THE FLU

Influenza (also known as the flu) is very easy to "catch" and is caused by a virus. In the United States, flu season usually starts in late fall and lasts throughout the winter. The flu is usually spread by the coughing and sneezing of infected persons. In most cases, adults are infectious from 1 to 2 days before they feel sick until about 5 days after the start of illness while children can spread infection from 6 days before the start of symptoms until at least 10 days after. Influenza can infect the nose, throat, and lungs causing symptoms such as fever, coughing, chills, sore throat, headache, and muscle aches.



For most people, getting immunized against the flu is the easiest and most effective way to reduce risk of infection. With one vaccination, once a year, they can help protect themselves and avoid spreading infection to others. Experts agree that anyone who wants to avoid getting influenza should get vaccinated. However, certain people are more at risk for serious complications if they get influenza and should get immunized. These include: 1) children 6 -23 months and their close contacts; 2) people with diabetes, asthma, heart diseases, kidney diseases, weakened immune system, and sickle-cell anemia; 3) women who will be pregnant during flu season; 4) People who live or work with high-risk people; 5) medical professionals, nursing home and day care personnel, and 6) people 50 years of age and older. *(Adapted from influenza.com. Submitted by the C.O.M. Health Team)*