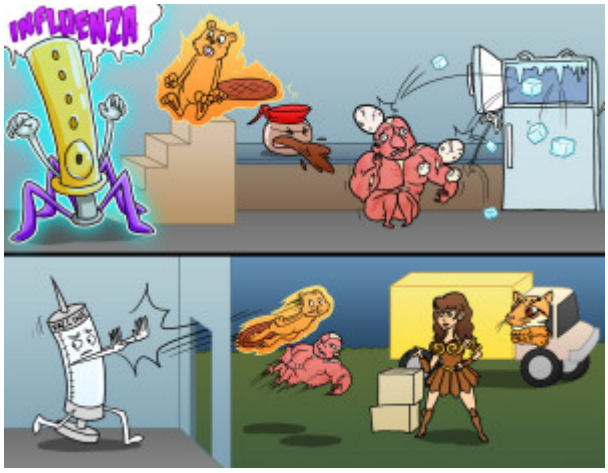
Influenza

Influenza is a highly infectious viral illness that is usually more severe than the common cold. The disease is spread through direct contact (large-droplet infection) or by articles recently contaminated by nasopharyngeal secretions. Symptoms include a high fever, headache, cough, muscle aches, and chills. Prevention by vaccination is the most effective treatment, while the drugs zanamivir and oseltamivir can also be used.



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Assessment

High Fever
High Fever-beaver
Viral infections often cause an increase in temperature. Febrile seizures may be present in small children and infants. Encourage additional fluid intake to replace fluid losses through sweating.

Cough
Coughing Coffee-pot
Influenza may affect lower respiratory tracts which differentiates it from the common cold. Cough is a less common symptom that is usually present in infants and resembles croup.

Headache
Head-egg-lump
Severe headache is a common early symptom of influenza.

Muscle Aches
Muscle-egg-lumps
Also termed myalgias, patients with influenza often have characteristic feelings of muscle aches and soreness.

Chills
Ice-cube
Patients with viral infections often have a high fever. As temperature regulation fluctuates in the body, this causes chills or a feeling of coolness or shivering as diaphoresis cools the skin.

Intervention

Vaccination
Syringe
The most important aspect of influenza treatment is prevention. Two types of vaccines are available as a nasal spray and intramuscular injection. Nasal spray influenza vaccine is a live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV). LAIV is only given to children over the age of 2 years. Do not give LAIV to persons who are immunocompromised. The more common intramuscular vaccine is a killed (inactivated) virus given to children over the age of 6 months. Persons with an egg allergy should not be given the intramuscular form of this vaccine.

Drug Therapy

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Zanamivir (Relenza)

Zena-mover

This medication is an inhaled antiviral medication (neuraminidase inhibitor) that decreases the duration of symptoms. It should be started at the earliest onset of symptoms and has little indication past 2 days.

Oseltamivir (Tamiflu)

Ocelot-mover

This medication is an oral antiviral medication (neuraminidase inhibitor) that decreases the duration of symptoms. It should be started at the earliest onset of symptoms and has little indication past 2 days.

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