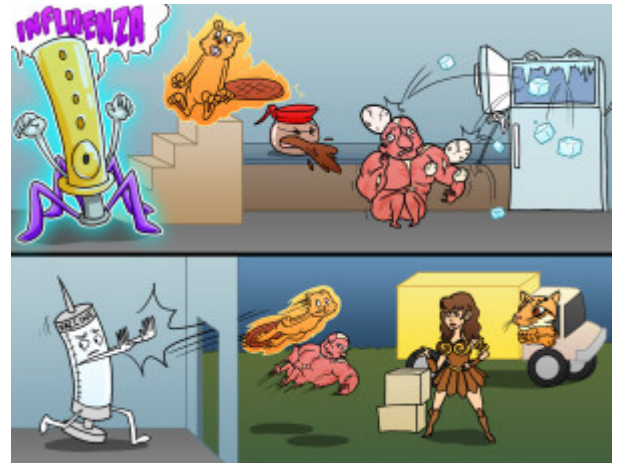


## Influenza

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

**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.