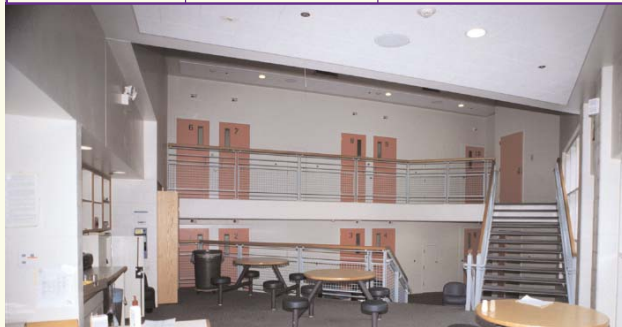


## COLD OR INFLUENZA

### How to tell the difference

Symptoms	Cold	Influenza
Fever	Rare	Characteristic, high (102–104F); lasts 3–4 days
Headache	Rare	Prominent
General aches	Slight	Usual; often severe
Fatigue, weakness	Quite mild	Can last 2–3 weeks
Extreme exhaustion	Never	Early and prominent
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild—moderate hacking cough	Common; can become severe
Complications	Sinus congestion or earache	Bronchitis, pneumonia; can be life-threatening
Prevention	None	Annual vaccination
Treatment	Temporary relief of symptoms	Antiviral medicines



## Additional Resources

For information regarding influenza activity across the state, please visit the following website:

Florida DOH Bureau of Epidemiology–Influenza Surveillance

[http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease\\_ctrl/epi/htopics/flu](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/epi/htopics/flu)

or contact your local county health department for information in your area.

For information regarding influenza activity nationally and worldwide, please visit the following websites:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu>

World Health Organization:

<http://www.who.int/en/>

For information regarding influenza vaccine recommendations and supply please visit the following website:

Florida DOH Bureau of Immunization

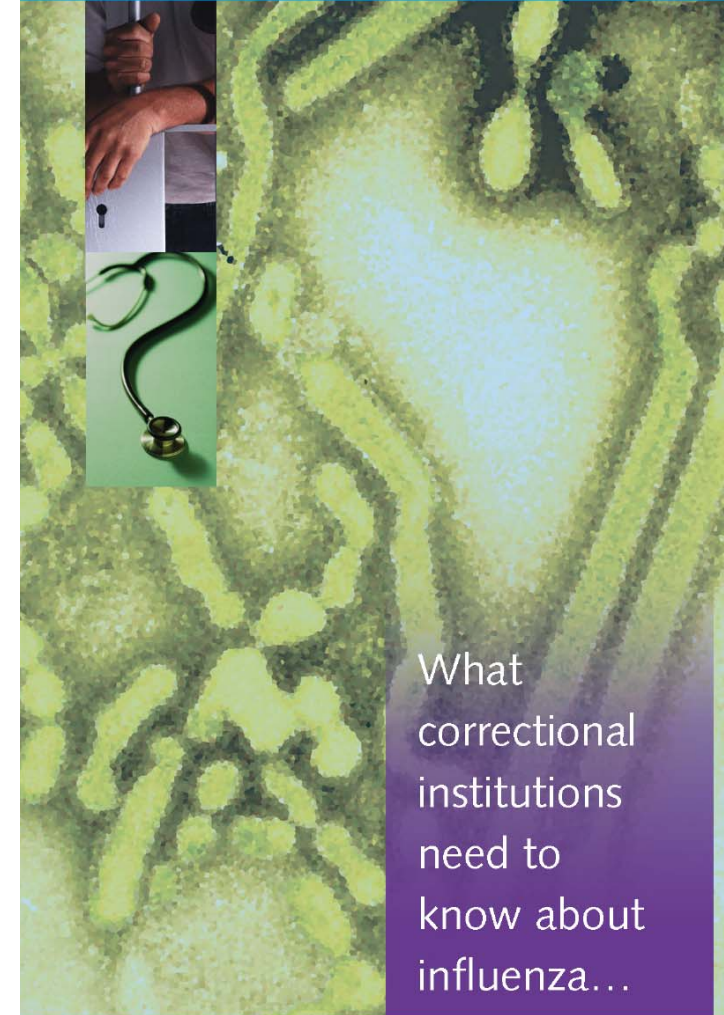
[http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease\\_ctrl/immune/influenza.html](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/immune/influenza.html)



August 2004

# INFLUENZA

## A GUIDE FOR CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS



What  
correctional  
institutions  
need to  
know about  
influenza...

Bureau of Epidemiology  
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin # A-12  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1720  
Phone (850) 245-4401  
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# WHAT IS THE FLU AND HOW CAN IT BE PREVENTED?

Influenza (commonly called “the flu”) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Infection with influenza viruses can result in illness ranging from mild to severe and life-threatening complications. An estimated 10% to 20% of U.S. residents get the flu each year. An average of 114,000 people are hospitalized for flu-related complications and 36,000 Americans die each year from complications of flu.

## At Risk Population

Certain people are at increased risk for serious complications from the flu. This group includes people of any age with chronic medical conditions such as chronic pulmonary disease, heart disease, diabetes and HIV/AIDS.

Correctional institutions have an added concern about influenza due to the nature of the institutional setting in which inmates and staff are in close contact on a daily basis.

Other concerns for correctional institutions regarding influenza besides the spreading of the virus from staff to inmates and vice versa include:

- High concentration of a population at risk for complications due to chronic health conditions and high-risk behaviors.
- Over-crowded living conditions.
- A population that is less likely to have had access to regular healthcare and therefore have not been previously vaccinated.
- History of frequent influenza outbreaks in correctional institutions.
- Difficulty in controlling or containing disease outbreaks within a facility.

## Preventing the Flu

The best prevention method against the flu is vaccination. Getting a flu shot every year is recommended for inmates, staff and anyone in close contact with those in the facility. Guards, inmates, visitors and other personnel can spread influenza within a facility.

Other methods to help prevent the spread of influenza are:

1. Wash your hands often. This will help protect you and others from a variety of illnesses, including the flu.
2. Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze will help protect those around you from getting sick.
3. Avoid contact with others when you are sick. If possible, staff should stay home from work if they are sick. In addition, isolating or cohorting sick inmates whenever possible will help prevent the spread of influenza.

## Complications

Some of the complications caused by the flu include bacterial pneumonia, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes.

If inmates or facility staff are in a group that is considered to be at high risk for complications from the flu and they get flu-like symptoms, they should consult with a healthcare provider immediately.

Early warning signs of complications that need immediate attention can include:

- High or prolonged fever
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest
- Near fainting or fainting
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Muscle ache

*Flu shot clinics can be established to ensure adequate vaccination coverage within the facility.*

## Other Issues

**Outbreaks.** An outbreak of influenza in a correctional institution can be a serious life-threatening situation. If an outbreak of influenza is suspected, notify your local county health department immediately.

**Testing.** Specimens can be submitted to the State Laboratories in Jacksonville and Tampa for testing via the county health department to verify possible influenza outbreaks. The local county health department will work closely with the Florida Department of Health to determine testing needs.

**Isolation.** Isolation of inmates presenting with influenza-like illness is highly recommended. The correctional facility's Infection Control Practitioner should work in conjunction with the local county health department to determine the best isolation procedures.

**Vaccine Timing.** The best time to receive the flu vaccine is during October and November. However, getting immunized in December or later can still provide protection against the flu. Typically in adults, antibody protection against the flu will develop about two weeks after receiving the vaccination.

**Staff Vaccination.** It is highly recommended that all staff be vaccinated not only to prevent the spread of influenza to inmates but also to prevent the spread of influenza from the facility to the community by exposing family and friends to the virus.

