

Battling Flu Season

We are currently in the grips of flu season with hundreds of cases being reported and some people even admitted to intensive care in hospital.

What is the Symptoms of the Current flu?

- The current flu largely affects the upper respiratory system so you get a dry cough, fever, aches and pain, nasal congestion, sore throat and tiredness.
- Elderly people may also get confusion, shortness of breath and symptoms which just don't seem to go away.
- Some people will also get gastro symptoms such as diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting and stomach cramps.

How is it Spread?

- The current flu is spread through droplets such as when a person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can travel up to a meter.
- It can also be spread by touching surfaces contaminated by these droplets – such as benchtops – and then touching your mouth.
- People can have the flu and be contagious for up to 5 days before symptoms appear.

How Do You Avoid Catching Flu?

- Wash your hands – especially before eating and drinking. If you don't have ready access to soap and water, use an alcohol antibacterial hand wash.
- Don't share items that touch the nose or mouth such as cutlery, cups, lipstick or cigarettes.
- Stay about one meter away from people who have flu like symptoms.
- Regularly clean surfaces which are commonly touched by people such as door handles, taps, fridge door and benches.
- If you have to clean up after somebody who vomited or has diarrhoea wear gloves and even a facemask and use bleach – normal bacterial wipes won't do the job – and paper towels which are then thrown away.
- If you are going on a plane or ship, take bacterial hand wash and wipes to clean tables.

What Do You Do if You Catch Flu?

- Rest and stay warm – do not go to work or school until at least 24 hours after the symptoms are totally gone.
- Drink plenty of fluids – lots of water and if vomiting a lot, rehydration gel or powder. A little ginger in warm water may ease nausea and mint tea may refresh your mouth.
- Eat bland, easy to digest food: crackers, toast, banana, rice. Avoid caffeine, alcohol, dairy and fatty or spicy food.
- Do not prepare food for other people as you may infect them too.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze and put used tissues straight in the bin.

How Long Does it Last?

- Usually you will start to feel better within a week but may have a cough or tiredness for a little while after.

When to See a Doctor

- If start to experience dizziness, high fevers, difficulty breathing, change in heart beat or any kind of rash, ring for an ambulance immediately.