

SEASONAL FLU- MEASLES

SYMPTOMS – TRANSMISSION - PREVENTION

SEASONAL FLU

What is Seasonal Flu?

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses and it is transmitted from human to human.



Most healthy people overcome the flu without complications present, but some of them, such as persons who belong at high risk groups have higher risk of serious complications. In Greece seasonal flu outbreaks occur during the winter months (from October to April).

Symptoms

People who have the flu often experience some or all the following symptoms:

- Headache
- Muscle or body aches
- Dizziness
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Fever
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Diarrhea and vomiting

The severe symptoms of flu last 4-6 days, with full recovery expected in 7-10 days after the onset of symptoms. Some severe cases



will recover in a few days to less than two weeks, but in others leave cough and a feeling of powerlessness that keeps a few weeks. Some people are at high risk of developing serious flu-related complications if they get sick. This includes people of any age suffering from certain chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, lung or heart disease, blood disorders, kidney disorders and neuromuscular diseases. Furthermore, pregnant women, young children, obese people, those who take immunosuppressant drugs and cortisone.

Incubation period and infectiousness

The transmissibility is greater immediately after the onset of symptoms and decreases over the following days. Patients may be contagious throughout the period during which they cough, even if they haven't had a fever for two days.

How flu spreads?

Influenza spreads from person to person through respiratory droplets (cough, sneezing), which can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Preventing the Flu

The best ways to prevent respiratory illnesses and help the spread of germs are the observance of hygiene rules, frequent and proper hand washing, covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing with a tissue or with our elbow, avoiding unnecessary handshakes and avoiding promiscuity contribute to prevention of transmission of the influenza virus. More specifically:

- All surfaces to be cleaned with cleaning agents that contain sodium hypochlorite
- Proper ventilation of closed spaces
- Avoid unnecessary handshakes
- You must use a tissue to cover mouth and nose when you cough, sneeze or blow your nose. Then you have to throw it immediately and clean your hands
- Wash your hands often, especially after coughing, sneezing and using a tissue
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Washing your hand before eating or smoking
- Washing your hand once you arrive at your workplace and as soon as you get home



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MEASLES

What is Measles?

Measles is a highly contagious virus which mainly affects children. In many European countries there is an ongoing measles outbreak. During the past 12 months there have been more than 14,000 reported cases and 41 deaths throughout Europe. In Greece till the 19th of October 2017 there have been 284 recorded cases, mainly in Southern Greece.

Measles' Symptoms:

The main symptoms are:

- Fever
- Runny nose
- Cough
- Light sensitivity
- Red eyes
- Rash "which appears as red,



itchy bumps, commonly develops on the head and slowly spreads to other parts of the body.

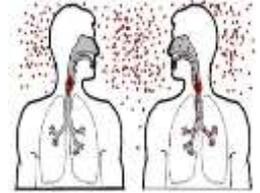
Around 30% of the cases have one or more complications which are more common in kids <5 years and adults >20 years. The most common complications are pneumonia which is the most common cause of death, encephalitis in children, otitis and sinusitis

Incubation period and infectiousness

Measles is contagious 4 days before the appearance of the rash and up to 4 days afterwards. Typical healing time for Measles is 10-12 days whereas the period between the exposure to the virus up to the disappearance of the rash is in average 14 days (7-18 days). The safest way to prevent the disease is vaccination. One dose of the vaccine (MMR) is about 94%-98% effective whereas two doses of the vaccine raise the effectiveness to about 99%.

How Measles spreads?

Measles is an airborne virus. It can spread to others through coughing and sneezing. Also, measles virus can live for up to two hours in an airspace where



the infected person coughed or sneezed. If other people breathe the contaminated air or touch the infected surface, then touch their eyes, noses, or mouths, they can become infected.

Preventing the Measles

To prevent the virus:

- Vaccinating twice children, teenagers and adults (born after 1970) that have not yet been vaccinated or been ill with the MMR vaccine.
- Parents, especially those with elder children, need to check the health records of their children and be advised by their pediatrician
- Children showing symptoms of Measles need to absent from school for at least 4-5 days from the day the rash appears
- If there are children that may have been exposed to the virus, they need to be kept away from vulnerable groups such as newborn babies and pregnant women.
- The main groups that need to be vaccinated are those working in education and healthcare as they have the highest exposure risk.

It is important to say that the MMR vaccine is highly effective and safe. It is prescribed free of charge from pediatricians and general practitioners.

Vaccination is an act of responsibility for both our vulnerability and our children and the wider community