

## **What is Flu?**

Flu (also known as Influenza) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness. Serious outcomes of flu infection can result in hospitalization or death. Older people, young children and individuals with certain health conditions are at higher risk for flu complication. The best way to prevent flu is by getting vaccinated each year. (Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

## **Help Us in Protecting Our Community**

We strongly encourage you to get vaccinated, too, since that helps disrupt the spread of the flu virus. Contact your primary care physician to have this done. If you do not have a primary care physician, the Spartanburg County Employee Health Clinic still has a limited supply of flu shots. Just call before you come to the Clinic to make sure there's one for you!

## **Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs**

*(Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention)*

The single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated every year, but good health habits like covering your mouth when coughing and washing your hands often can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu. There also are flu antiviral drugs that can be used to treat the flu, if symptoms have been present 24-72 hrs. Antibiotics will not help with the flu.

**1. Avoid close contact.** Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

**2. Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school and errands in public places when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

**3. Cover your mouth and nose.** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

**4. Wash your hands.** Wash your hands often to help protect yourself from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

**5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

**6. Practice other good health habits.** Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is sick. Get plenty of sleep, stay physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.