

# INFLUENZA AND DIABETICS

Seasonal flu is a contagious disease caused by the influenza virus. Even if their disease is well controlled by medication, people with diabetes (type 1 and 2) run a greater risk of acute disease and serious complications (hospitalization and death).

## DIABETICS ARE MORE VULNERABLE

Diabetes makes people more vulnerable to serious flu complications.

- The infection causes an increase in their blood sugar level.
- Their dietary intake may be reduced during the flu and cause blood sugar levels to fluctuate.

## FLU SYMPTOMS

The flu can cause mild to serious symptoms and sometimes even lead to death. Infected persons experience at least one of the following symptoms:

- Fever, (not always present, particularly in the elderly)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Muscle and joint pain
- Headache
- Extreme fatigue
- Nausea and vomiting, (particularly in children)

Most people infected by the influenza virus will get better in just a few days, but diabetics may experience a rapid deterioration of their general health.

## FLU COMPLICATIONS

Pneumonia, bronchitis, sinusitis and otitis are among the most frequent complications of the flu but some people will develop even more serious complications which can sometimes be fatal.

## TREATING THE FLU

Fever and pain medication can ease flu symptoms. Antiviral medication against the influenza virus can help reduce the duration of symptoms and the risk of complications. It must be taken within 48 hours following onset of the first symptoms.

## PREVENTING THE FLU

The best way to prevent the flu is to receive the vaccine every year. Good hygiene habits such as washing your hands regularly and covering your mouth when coughing can help limit propagation of the flu and other respiratory viruses.

### VACCINATION, YOUR BEST PROTECTION AGAINST THE INFLUENZA VIRUS

People with type 1 or type 2 diabetes who are 6 months and older should receive the influenza vaccine. Data supports the preventive effect of vaccination among diabetics. The flu shot should be part of all diabetics' management plan.

*Vaccination against serious pneumococcal infections (for example: blood infections, pneumonia, meningitis) is also recommended for diabetics. Two different pneumococcal vaccines are recommended to ensure your protection. Ask your physician or the CLSC.*

I SPREAD HEALTH, NOT INFLUENZA.  
**I GET THE FLU SHOT.**