

### Learn to Recognize Signs of the Flu

From Children's Hospital Boston

Influenza (or flu) is one of the most severe illnesses of the winter season. An estimated five to 20 percent of the population in the United States contracts influenza each year. Influenza is a viral infection of the upper respiratory system that is marked by the following symptoms:

- ☞ Muscle aches
- ☞ Nonproductive cough
- ☞ Runny or stuffy nose
- ☞ Fever
- ☞ Sore throat
- ☞ Headache

Influenza can strike people of any age. Although most are ill for only a few days, some have a much more serious illness and may need to be hospitalized. Influenza may also lead to pneumonia and/or death.

What causes influenza

An influenza virus is generally passed from person to person by airborne transmission. This means that people can contract the flu by coming into contact with airborne viruses from an affected person by way of sneezing and coughing. The virus can also live for a short time on objects such as doorknobs, pens and pencils, keyboards, telephone receivers, and eating or drinking utensils. Therefore, it may also be spread after you touch something that has been handled by someone infected with the virus and then touch your own mouth, nose, or eyes.

People are generally the most contagious with the flu 24 hours before they start having symptoms and during the time they have the most symptoms. That is why it is hard to prevent the spread of the flu, especially among children, because people do not always know they are sick while they are spreading the disease.

Most people recover from influenza within a week, but may be left feeling exhausted for as long as

*Continued on the next page*

*Dear Reader,*

*In this issue of the Health Update, we bring you tips from the WorldCare Consortium hospitals on recognizing flu symptoms, and on the health benefits of monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs). You'll also learn about an important new approach for treating a chronic heart condition.*

*Sincerely,*

*Rebika Shaw,*

*Regional Director, Corporate Communications*

### HEALTH NEWS

#### MUFAs: Why should my diet include these fats? What are MUFAs, and should I include them in my diet?

From Mayo Clinic

MUFAs are monounsaturated fatty acids. MUFAs are considered a healthy type of fat. If your diet includes unsaturated fats such as MUFAs (and polyunsaturated fats, or PUFAs) instead of saturated fats and trans fats, you may gain certain health benefits.

Consuming monounsaturated fatty acids may help lower your risk of heart disease by improving associated risk factors. For instance, MUFAs may lower your total blood cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol levels. MUFAs may also help normalize blood clotting. And some research shows that MUFAs may also benefit insulin levels and blood sugar control, which can be especially helpful if you have type 2 diabetes.

MUFAs are a central part of the heart-healthy Mediterranean diet. But even if you don't follow a Mediterranean-style diet, you can include more of these MUFA-rich foods in your diet:

- ☞ Avocados
- ☞ Nut butters
- ☞ Olives
- ☞ Nuts, such as almonds, cashews, pecans and macadamias
- ☞ Canola oil
- ☞ Olive oil
- ☞ Peanut oil
- ☞ Sesame seeds

Just don't go overboard. All fats, including MUFAs, are high in calories, so use MUFAs only in moderation. Consume MUFA-rich foods instead of other fatty foods, not in addition to them. The Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services recommend that fat make up no more than 20 to 35 percent of your daily calories.



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## Signs of the Flu (continued)

three to four weeks. The symptoms of influenza may resemble other conditions or medical problems. Always consult your physician for a diagnosis.

How is a cold different from the flu?

A cold and the flu are two different illnesses. A cold is relatively harmless and usually clears up by itself, although sometimes it may lead to a secondary infection, such as an ear infection. What may seem like a cold could be the flu. Be aware of these differences:

Cold Symptoms:

- ☞ Low or no fever
- ☞ Sneezing
- ☞ Stuffy, runny nose
- ☞ Mild fatigue
- ☞ Mild, hacking cough
- ☞ Sore throat
- ☞ Normal energy level
- ☞ Slight aches and pains
- ☞ Sometimes a headache

Flu Symptoms:

- ☞ High fever
- ☞ Extreme exhaustion
- ☞ Headache
- ☞ Sometimes sneezing
- ☞ Clear nose or stuffy nose
- ☞ Cough, often becoming severe
- ☞ Often severe aches and pains
- ☞ Several weeks of fatigue
- ☞ Sometimes a sore throat

## A treatment for tough heart rhythm problems

*From Duke Medicine*

Doctors can now treat chronic atrial fibrillation – a heart problem – with a new, specialized procedure called *pulmonary vein isolation* or *catheter ablation treatment*.

This approach combines medications with an intensive procedure that uses microwave energy to repair problems in the heart tissue.

“It is a very exciting way to help people

## NEWS ON WORLDCARE

**WorldCare and eMindful partner to reduce stress and improve health.** WorldCare has partnered with eMindful Inc., a pioneer in groundbreaking interactive online classroom courses focusing on increased physiological and psychological well-being. WorldCare members can access eMindful's high-tech and "high-touch" programs for optimal health and wellness, to reap the benefits of productive behavioral change, stress reduction, and personal growth. Program design hinges on evidence-based research which demonstrates the beneficial effects of mindfulness and yoga as a complement to conventional medicine, as well as potential health care costs savings that could be realized by reducing stress.

### Patient Perspective

*“I posed an unusual and difficult diagnosis to WorldCare. They tackled the problem using all their resources. I feel the organization went “above and beyond” in my behalf.”*

WorldCare member D.S.

### About WorldCare

The global health care community has trusted WorldCare since 1994, when it became the first company to offer physician-referred, patient-specific, second opinion e-consultations (telemedicine) for serious illnesses. WorldCare benefits patients around the world by providing access to top physicians, cutting edge medical practices and best medical advice through highly specialized electronic medical opinions from the best medical centers in the United States.

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with rhythm problems that have not responded well to medications,” says Ruth A. Greenfield, MD, of the Duke Heart Center. “Our physicians and nurse practitioners specialize in atrial fibrillation, so we can bring a very focused, whole-person approach to the problem and help people who haven’t been able to find relief.”

Does Your Heart Go Pitter, or Pat?

Your primary care doctor can identify a heart rhythm problem and, if

necessary, refer you to a specialist for further care. Symptoms of heart rhythm problems that people may notice and want to discuss with their physician include:

- ☞ Fatigue
- ☞ Exercise intolerance
- ☞ Weakness
- ☞ Dizziness
- ☞ Fainting
- ☞ Heartbeats that skip and race



Contact your local WorldCare office if you are interested in obtaining a second opinion from a WorldCare Consortium hospital. Visit [www.WorldCare.com](http://www.WorldCare.com) for more information.