



Health Awareness

American Lung Association Offers Free Booklet Featuring New Guidelines for Influenza and the Common Cold TM

(NAPSA)—During the winter months when influenza (commonly known as the flu) and cold season is in full swing, there are so many tips about preventing and overcoming these illnesses that sorting out the facts can be confusing.

Thanks to the American Lung Association's newly updated guidelines for the prevention and treatment of influenza and the common cold, understanding the key differences between the two illnesses, how they are transmitted, symptoms, as well as prevention and treatment options available is now easier.

As part of an educational partnership, the American Lung Association; Hoffmann-La Roche Inc., the maker of Tamiflu[®]; and McNeil Consumer and Specialty Pharmaceuticals, the maker of Tylenol[®], are offering consumers a free copy of the updated guidelines, available in English or Spanish, by calling 888-254-4054 or visiting www.lungusa.org.

Following is some of the information available from the American Lung Association's survival guide for preventing and treating influenza and the common cold.

What is Influenza (Flu)?

Flu is an infection of the respiratory system caused by the influenza virus. The virus spreads by traveling through the air and sometimes by direct contact. When an infected person sneezes,

coughs or speaks, he or she releases tiny droplets of flu particles that are inhaled into the lungs, causing the virus to grow in the upper and lower respiratory tracts. It also affects other parts of the body.

More often than not, flu symptoms appear suddenly and may include fever, cough, muscle aches, headaches, sore throat, chills and tiredness. Most people recover from flu within one or two weeks, but others, especially the elderly, may feel weak for a long time even after symptoms go away. The flu can be fatal in elderly people, people with chronic diseases and anyone with a weak immune system.

How Do You Prevent or Treat the Flu?

The best tool for preventing the flu is the flu vaccine. However, you shouldn't get a flu shot if you are allergic to eggs or any component of the vaccine, have a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome, or if you are sick with an acute illness and fever.

There also are new antiviral treatments, such as Tamiflu[®], that can reduce the length of the illness and reduce the severity of symptoms by at least one day. To relieve the aches and fever associated with the flu, the preferred over-the-counter medication is acetaminophen, like Tylenol[®], which, unlike aspirin and other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs

(NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, is less likely to irritate the stomach.

Time is of the essence; it is important to see your doctor within two days after flu symptoms appear to find out what treatments are right for you.

What is a Cold?

Colds are minor infections of the nose and throat caused by several different viruses. Colds are highly contagious and are most often spread when droplets of fluid that contain the cold virus are transferred by touch or are inhaled.

Between one and three days after a cold virus enters the body, symptoms start developing and may include runny nose, congestion, sneezing, weakened senses of taste and smell, scratchy throat and cough. A cold may last about one week, but some colds last longer, especially in children, elderly people and those in poor health.

How Do You Treat a Cold?

Over-the-counter medications can provide temporary relief of symptoms and should be used as soon as you feel a cold coming on. Acetaminophen, which is contained in products such as Tylenol[®], is the preferred over-the-counter medication for relief of the fever and aches associated with a cold. It is less likely to upset your stomach than aspirin and other NSAIDs. It is important to discuss all medication choices with your doctor.