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### Statement on Influenza

Influenza has been very active this year, not only in Lebanon but all over the world.

The flu season can stretch from late November to end of March and sometimes beyond.

Influenza is a very contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses, it can cause mild to severe illness, and rarely can lead to death.

The signs and symptoms of flu usually come on suddenly. Symptoms may be: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, headaches, fatigue or vomiting.

The people at high risk of complications are adults older than 65, pregnant women, young children, asthmatics, cancer patients and HIV infected individuals, diabetics, patients suffering from heart disease or stroke and children with neurologic conditions. Those people should consult the specialist and take the influenza antiviral drugs quickly. Antibiotic treatment is not recommended for influenza, but sometimes it will be administered if the patient develops a superimposed bacterial infection as a complication of his flu, like bronchitis, pneumonia or otitis.

A lot of people in Lebanon have been affected with a wide spectrum of illness ranging from some fever and muscles pains all the way to requiring admission to the hospital and at times to the intensive care unit. A few died because of the complications caused by the virus.

That's why influenza is a condition that should not be taken lightly, prevention is key and is achieved through vaccination, as such, it is recommended that everyone over the age of 6 months get a flu vaccine each season.

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