Flu F.A.C.T.S.

The common cold and influenza (the “flu”) are both common respiratory illnesses caused by viruses. Both can be treated at home with rest, good self-care, and symptom management. Being viral rather than bacterial infections, neither will benefit from antibiotics.

While the symptoms of colds and the flu often overlap, the flu is usually worse. If you have asthma or another chronic medical condition, if you’re pregnant, or if you’re very young or very old, the flu may be particularly severe or lead to pneumonia or other complications.

There is no routine test for colds. There is a test for the flu, though it does not always detect it. Antiviral medicines can be prescribed for the flu but need to be started early and may be of only marginal benefit in otherwise healthy people.

The memory aid “F.A.C.T.S.” can help you recognize when you’re suffering from the flu:

- **F**ever – common in the flu, often over 101° for several days
- **A**ches – often severe body aches
- **C**hills – usually preceding fevers
- **T**iredness – often profound, can persist for 2-3 weeks
- **S**udden onset

Call the Health Center at **541-346-2770** to speak with a nurse if you have some or all of these symptoms, need help deciding whether to seek medical care, or have any chronic medical conditions such as asthma that might make the flu more severe for you.

You can protect yourself and others from the flu by getting a yearly flu vaccine, washing your hands frequently, covering coughs and sneezes, staying home when ill, and avoiding close contact with anyone who is ill.