What is seasonal influenza?

- Influenza or “the flu” is an illness caused by seasonal influenza viruses which circulate in all parts of the world.
- Seasonal influenza viruses circulate worldwide and can affect people in any age group.
- In temperate climates, seasonal epidemics occur mainly during winter while in tropical regions, influenza seasonality is less obvious, and epidemics can occur throughout the year.
- In Myanmar, June to September is the usual influenza season coinciding with the monsoon.

How is influenza virus spreading and how to prevent spread?

- It is a droplet infection, not airborne.
- When an infected person coughs or sneezes, infectious droplets (containing flu viruses) are dispersed into the air. They can spread up to one meter and infect persons close by who breathe these droplets in.
- Flu viruses also frequently spread by contaminated hands.
- Therefore, frequent hand washing with soap and water as well as cleaning surfaces is key to prevention.

Help Prevent Influenza

WHO Myanmar newsletter special, 2 July 2019

Update

The annual flu season is under way. We would like to provide up to date information regarding influenza -- including simple ways of prevention.

As advised by Ministry of Health and Sports, Myanmar, as at Sunday 30 June 2019, a total of 343 cases of influenza like illnesses and severe acute respiratory infections were laboratory tested during the first six months of 2019. A total of 111 cases were positive for influenza (all sub types): 95 were confirmed for seasonal influenza A(H1N1)pdm09; 6 for influenza A(H3); and 10 for influenza B.

The total of 111 cases includes 20 deaths -- with 17 reported from Yangon Region; 1 from Ayeyarwaddy Region; 2 from Sagaing Region. WHO is actively collaborating with the national health authorities to support prevention, detection and response to influenza.

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How we suffer?

- high fever
- cough (usually dry)
- sore throat
- headache
- muscle pain
- time from infection to illness (incubation period) is about 2 days, ranging from one to four days

Seasonal influenza vaccination

- Vaccination is one of the effective ways to prevent infection and to reduce severity of disease caused by influenza viruses.
- Vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of influenza -- see page 2 -- and for people who live with, or care for, people at higher risk.
WHO recommends annual vaccination for the following individuals:

- Pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy
- Children aged between 6 months to 5 years
- Elderly individuals (age more than 65 years)
- Individuals with chronic medical conditions
- Health-care workers

How to prevent flu?

1. Cover your nose and mouth by coughing or sneezing into elbow or arm. Or, use a tissue to fully cover mouth and nose, then discard used tissue well. Wash your hands with soap and water thoroughly and frequently.

2. Eat nutritious food and drink plenty of water.

3. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.

4. Get plenty of rest and exercise mildly.

5. Seek advice from health professionals if you have symptoms of flu.

For more information please visit WHO website:
http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-(seasonal)