

is believed to be a major source of transmission in a community. The disease is more common during the winter months and has a 1- to 3-day incubation period. Affected persons are most infectious for 24 hours before and after the onset of symptoms. The virus has a peculiar affinity for epithelial cells of the respiratory tract mucosa, where it destroys ciliated epithelium with metaplastic hyperplasia of the tracheal and bronchial epithelium with associated edema. The alveoli may also become distended with a hyaline-like material. The viruses can be isolated from nasopharyngeal secretions early after the onset of infection, and serologic tests identify the type by complement fixation or the subgroups by hemagglutination inhibition.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(2011\)](#), more than 200,000 people in the United States are hospitalized each year for respiratory and heart conditions illnesses associated with seasonal influenza virus infections.

Clinical Manifestations

The manifestations of influenza may be subclinical, mild, moderate, or severe. Most patients have a dry throat and nasal mucosa, a dry cough, and a tendency toward hoarseness. A flushed face, photophobia, myalgia, hyperesthesia, and sometimes exhaustion and lack of energy accompany a sudden onset of fever and chills. Subglottal croup can occur, especially in infants. The symptoms of influenza last for 4 or 5 days. Complications include severe viral pneumonia (often hemorrhagic); encephalitis; and secondary bacterial infections such as otitis media (OM), sinusitis, or pneumonia.

Therapeutic Management

Uncomplicated influenza in children usually requires only symptomatic treatment, including acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever and sufficient fluids to maintain hydration. There are four influenza antiviral drugs approved by the US Food and Drug Administration for use in the United States, but only oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza) are recommended because of widespread resistance to amantadine (Symmetrel) and rimantadine (Flumadine) ([American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on](#)