Antiviral Medications

What is an Antiviral Medicine?

An antiviral is a medicine that can prevent a virus from infecting a healthy cell or interferes with the viruses ability to make copies or duplicating of itself from inside a healthy host cell.

What can Antiviral Medications do?

- ✓ decrease how easily the virus can infect cells
- ✓ reduce the strength of the infection
- ✓ decrease the length of illness
- ✓ minimize serious complications

When should Antiviral Medications be taken?

To be effective, they must be taken as soon as possible or within 48 hours of the start of symptoms and taken for five full days, even after your symptoms have gone. If you stop sooner, your symptoms may return. In clinical tests, antiviral medications have been found to shorten the flu illness by 24 to 36 hours.

What Antiviral Medications Don't Do.

Unlike vaccines, antiviral medications do not prevent illness by creating an immunity; they reduce the impact of the flu by decreasing the ability of the virus to infect and then replicate within healthy cells. They do not cure influenza. Therefore, people must continue taking antiviral medication as long as they are exposed to the virus. Antivirals cannot stop you from becoming infected, although for prevention, antivirals are about 70% to 90% effective in preventing illness in healthy adults. Antivirals will not stop you from infecting others while you have the flu, though they may make you less contagious.

Types of Antiviral Medications		
Type	Neuramidase inhibitors*	M2 channel inhibitors
How it works	Decreases how well the virus infects healthy cells.	Decreases how well the virus reproduces, after infecting cells.
Medication Names	✓ oseltamavir (common name Tamiflu® made by Roche) ✓ zanamivir (common name Relenza®) ✓ Antiflu (oseltamavir phosphate made by cipla)	✓ amantadine (common name Symmetrel®) ✓ rimantadine (common name, Flumadine®)
	** Only the neuramidase inhibitors are active against **both** influenza A and B virus types.* Studies have shown that, if taken within two days of the start of the flu, Tamiflu® can reduce the strength of symptoms and how long they last by up to 30%. Tamiflu® can: ▪ reduce hospitalizations by up to 60% ▪ prevent the flu in up to 70% of healthy people if taken during an outbreak.	