

# OFFICIAL CAUTIONS AS TO INFLUENZA

## Letter From State Board of Health Addressed to the Public in General.

The following letter was sent to all Boards of Health in the Commonwealth by Dr. B. Franklin Boyer, Acting Commissioner of Health:

Influenza is apparently rapidly becoming epidemic in the eastern part of the United States. It is imperative that Health Authorities be prepared to cope with this epidemic, that they shall be prepared to issue advice concerning preventive measures that may be helpful in averting serious outbreaks of the disease, and that they now prepare to render relief even before the disease becomes epidemic.

This disease, which is apparently the same type of influenza that swept over America in 1889 and 1890, is sudden in onset and is characterized by fever from 101 to 104 degrees, chilliness, headache, and pain in widely distributed areas; pneumonia and nephritis being common and dangerous complications. Mild cases may run a course of from three days to a week. A large proportion of cases are severely prostrated and in addition to an annoying bronchitis may develop fatal pneumonia. Abscesses may occur in ears, tonsils or lungs. Depressing nervous manifestations may continue for some time in convalescence and vitality may be greatly lowered to other disease processes.

Your citizens should now and until the epidemic wave has entirely subsided be urged to practice every care in the way of personal and domestic hygiene; to secure clean, wholesome food of considerable variety; to watch the organs of elimination and avoid constipation, at least one free movement of the bowels should be obtained daily. They should be especially urged to keep in the fresh air as much as possible, night and day and to avoid spending time in crowded places of entertainment or diversion. Especial attention should be called to the dangers of travel in crowded trolleys or railway cars and to over-crowded living conditions. It would be well to urge wide open windows, throwing up of shades and removal of awnings and of utilizing the best of all air purification, sunshine.

It would be well to urge upon your citizens the avoidance of fatigue of every sort, as nothing lowers resistance to this disease as much as fatigue. Urge regularity of meals, regularity of habits and avoidance of dissipation and especially alcoholic dissipations.

As a means of prevention, call attention in posters, in circulars and in newspaper articles to the need of care when early symptoms develop resembling "colds," and insist that all such persons remain as nearly as possible on their own premises. Those convalescent should be urged to remain on their own premises for at least a week after fever subsides and longer when cough persists. Should the disease become widely prevalent in your community, all places where persons congregate in numbers should be closed. Probably the public schools may need to be closed in some communities later, but for the present the consensus of medical public health opinion would be that children in well ventilated school rooms are reasonably safe, certainly much safer than in moving picture halls and other places badly ventilated.

Influenza is spread by infectious particles thrown out while coughing and sneezing. Probably nothing would better fix the attention to the need of covering the mouth and nose with a handkerchief when coughing and nothing would better fix the attention of your citizens upon the danger of infection from the droplets of moisture thrown out while coughing and sneezing than for you now to enforce the anti-spitting act. A few arrests made each week of persons spitting on sidewalks, railway platforms in railway carriages or other public places would fix the attention of your citizens upon this sort of care in a way that would offer protection against respiratory dis-



## It won't itch now, dear Resinol

will help to make it well and relieve the smart and pain.

Do not neglect a spot of eczema, rash, or other itching, burning eruptions and sores, because children's skins are easily irritated, and if the hurt is neglected, obstinate trouble may persist in later life.

Resinol Ointment and Resinol Soap were originated by a doctor and have been used by doctors for many years.

All dealers sell them.

eases now and in future. We, therefore strongly urge that such examples be made now.

Many communities believe it to be of great advantage to have influenza made reportable. Should you take such action probably it would be well to place in the hands of every adult having the disease and in the hands of parents of children having the disease, a circular of instructions, urging destruction of sputum during the height of the disease and for a week of convalescence, or its collection in handkerchiefs or sputum cups by ambulatory cases and to place such individuals on their honor to remain away from public gatherings for a full week after fever subsides.

Doctors and nurses may protect themselves by masking the patient with gauze or a towel when working about the sick just as we always do in making careful examination of the tuberculosis. All attendants and visitors should carefully cleanse hands with soap and water and all bed linen and utensils should be disinfected frequently by boiling.

It would be well to make a survey of hospital facilities available in case of an epidemic or to select suitable buildings for an emergency hospital. It is advisable to make provision where possible for isolation of cases and for special stalls made by stringing wires and hanging sheets in large wards.

With any undue prevalence of the disease in your community, kindly advise this Department by telegraph or telephone.

This note is issued after conference with the Advisory Board of the Department of Health.