

Influenza Bug Cannot Pass Through Mask, Dean Asserts

It ought to be definitely stated," said Dr. William Ophuls, dean of the Stanford Medical School and professor of pathology, "that as far as experiments show, the influenza bacillus cannot get through a properly made gauze mask. The only way it can get past a mask is to go around it."

Dr. Ophuls, who is recognized as one of the chief medical authorities on the Pacific Coast, was speaking yesterday of the common argument around town that if the influenza bacillus is so small it must be able to pass through the mask with the air and the breath.

"All the bacteriological experience would be against the assumption that any organism, no matter how small, can pass through a gauze mask," said Dr. Ophuls. "The usual method of protecting our cultures of bacteria in the laboratory is to place a small plug of gauze in the end of the tube and the bacteria cannot escape.

CAN'T BE BLOWN THROUGH

"Experiments have been made in which it was attempted to blow bacilli through gauze and it was found that they did not pass through.

"It should be remembered that influenza bacillus is expelled with tiny droplets of moisture in the breath, and that these droplets are sure to catch in the meshes of the gauze. There the bacilli die quickly.

"It is not true that the influenza bacillus is too small to be seen with the microscope. It is true that they are difficult to see, but nevertheless they can be seen and made out very plainly. I have just this minute been looking at some of them.

"The bacillus that causes this influenza is well known, recognized long ago, and is called Pfeiffer's bacillus."