Appalachian Regional Healthcare System (ARHS) asks that anyone sick with the flu or flu-like symptoms voluntarily refrain from visiting hospitalized family and friends, as well as those persons at the hospital for an outpatient procedure. It is also important that during this time of increased flu cases in our area visitors 12 and under not visit hospitalized family and friends. According to the Centers for Disease Control, flu activity is on the rise in the U.S. with 47 states reporting widespread illness. North Carolina is one of these states. Appalachian Regional Healthcare System's hospital emergency rooms, along with the physician offices and AppUrgent Care, have seen an increase in the number of people presenting with influenza-like illness. While everyone who presents is not tested for the flu, among those tested in the System's facilities, more than 140 have tested positive since November 2012. Watauga Medical Center has admitted 17 patients due to the flu. "Patients are very vulnerable while in the hospital, so we are appealing to those community members who may be ill with the flu, or exposed to the flu, to refrain from visiting in order to help us protect the patients in our facilities," stated Dr. Herman Godwin, Chief Medical Officer for Appalachian Regional Healthcare System. "Our top priority is to take every appropriate precaution to keep our patients safe."
Flu viruses spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing. Sometimes an individual may catch flu by touching an object infected with the virus and then touching the eyes, mouth, or nose. There are several things you can do to prevent catching or spreading the flu: Protect yourself, your family and your community.