

FACTS ABOUT FLU

What is the flu?

Influenza (flu) is a disease that affects people’s airways and lungs. It is caused by influenza viruses that pass from person to person easily. Each flu season, several different flu viruses spread. Even healthy children and adults can get very sick from the flu and spread it to family and friends.

What happens when you get the flu?

Flu can affect people differently based on their age and health conditions.

| Common Symptoms | Possible Symptoms |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fever • tiredness (can be extreme) • headache • cough • sore throat • runny or stuffy nose • muscle aches | <p>These symptoms may occur, and are more common in children than adults:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nausea • vomiting • diarrhea |

How serious is the flu?

For healthy children and adults, flu is typically a mild or moderate illness. It may cause considerable discomfort and require staying home for a period of days, but most otherwise healthy people will get better with rest at home and plenty of fluids.

Flu can be serious for infants and children under two years of age, pregnant women, and many people who have long-term health problems such as diabetes, asthma, neurological diseases, heart or lung problems, weakened immune systems, and possibly, obesity. These people are at high risk for severe illness and should call their doctor if they develop flu symptoms. In some instances, flu can lead to hospitalization and even death. Doctors can prescribe anti-viral medicine to prevent severe illness, but they work best if given within 48 hours of getting sick.

How does flu spread?

Flu spreads from people who are infected to others through coughs and sneezes. When people cough or sneeze, they spread germs through the air or onto surfaces that other people may touch.

What can I do to protect myself and others from catching the flu?

Get flu vaccine each year. It’s the single best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from flu. Health experts recommend flu vaccine for all people 6 months and older. Make sure everyone who lives with or cares for an infant younger than 6 months gets vaccinated to protect the infant from getting flu.

You can also take these everyday steps to protect yourself and others from getting sick:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand cleaners.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Touching these areas spreads germs.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Cover your nose and mouth with your sleeve or a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Stay home from work and school until at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, and avoid close contact with others when sick.