

# Colds vs Flu

## Colds (5-10 days)

- Top symptoms: sniffles, sneezing, sore throat, stuffed up nose, cough
- Symptoms appear gradually
- Symptoms are annoying but tolerable. A person can usually go about daily business (*but they should rest if possible*).

## The Flu

- Top symptoms: fever, headache, body aches, sore throat, dry cough, extreme tiredness.
- The flu comes on suddenly and symptoms are more severe than a cold.
- The person wants to lie down and rest.

### For more information about the flu & pandemic flu:

Centers for Disease Control:

[www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu) (general info)

[www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/hiv-flu.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/hiv-flu.htm) (HIV/AIDS & the flu)

[www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/flugallery/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/flugallery/index.htm)  
(patient education materials)

Public Health—Seattle & King County:

[www.metrokc.gov/health/prevcont/influenza.htm](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/prevcont/influenza.htm)

[www.metrokc.gov/health/stopgerms/index.htm](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/stopgerms/index.htm)

Washington Department of Health:

[www.doh.wa.gov/FluNews](http://www.doh.wa.gov/FluNews) (includes multilingual materials)



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[www.metrokc.gov/health/hchn](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/hchn)

# Cold and Flu Season



# How to Protect Yourself

Health Care for the Homeless Network  
Phone: 206-296-5091

# Do you spend time in crowded places or have a chronic condition?

## You may be at risk for colds or the flu. Get the facts...

*People without stable living situations* may be particularly vulnerable to colds and flu due to:

- Lack of access to bed rest, medical & supportive care when ill.
- Crowded living settings where flu can spread easily.
- Weakened immune systems or chronic health issues.
- Being around others who may have poor respiratory and hand hygiene.

*To stay healthy this cold season* try to do whatever you can to keep your immune system strong:

- Moderate physical activity (a brisk walk everyday)
- Eat nutritious foods
- Try to reduce your stress
- Avoid drugs and alcohol
- Quit smoking or smoke less
- Stay hydrated (drink enough water/juice, NOT soda/coffee)
- Go outside for fresh air often (at least every hour or two)
- Avoid close contact with other people while you or they are sick

## Who is at High Risk?

*Anyone* can get the flu, however people in the following situations are at higher risk and should take special precautions to avoid getting sick:

- People age 65 or older.
- People who frequently spend time in crowded situations (shelters, bus...)
- People residing in a nursing home or chronic care facility.
- People with chronic conditions (such as: asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, cystic fibrosis, heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes, chronic metabolic disorders, or severe anemia).
- People with diseases or treatments that depress immunity (such as AIDS/HIV, TB, chemotherapy)
- Pregnant women in their 2nd or 3rd trimester during flu season.
- *People who work or spend time with others who are at high risk for flu!*

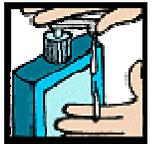
## Reduce Your Risk

**Influenza (the Flu)** is a contagious respiratory virus spread through the air by sneezing & coughing, or by direct contact such as a handshake or touching recently contaminated surfaces.



- **Wash your hands often** or use alcohol based hand sanitizer gel.

(When? After taking the bus, when you enter a building, before eating...)



- **Cover your cough** with your inner elbow or a tissue (& throw it away)



- **Avoid touching your face**, nose, eyes, and mouth. Use clean tissues, napkins, or paper towels to do this.

- **Get a flu shot**, especially if you are in a high risk category for flu or spend time with people who are.



***These measures help protect you from many other types of infections too!***