

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 (general info)

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

www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/flugallery/index.htm
(patient education materials)

Public Health—Seattle & King County:

www.metrokc.gov/health/prevcont/influenza.htm

www.metrokc.gov/health/stopgerms/index.htm

Washington Department of Health:

www.doh.wa.gov/FluNews (includes multilingual materials)



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Cold and Flu Season



How to Protect Yourself

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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!*

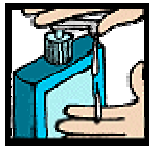
Reduce Your Risk

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.

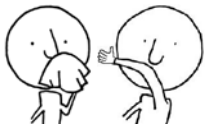


- **Wash your hands often** or use alcohol based hand sanitizer gel.

(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!