



Flu Facts 2017–2018

What Is the Flu?

Influenza, or the flu, is a contagious respiratory disease that can lead to serious illness. Each year, thousands of healthy adults and children need to visit a doctor or are hospitalized from flu complications. Flu is unpredictable and can be severe. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone six months of age and older should get an annual flu vaccine. Being protected by a flu vaccine can reduce doctor's visits, hospitalizations, missed work and school, as well as helping to prevent the spread of flu. Vaccination helps protect women during and after pregnancy and can protect the baby for several months after birth.

How Do I Know It Is the Flu?

It can be hard to tell if you have the flu based on symptoms alone.

Symptoms of flu can include:

- Fever or feeling feverish
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Fatigue

Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults, and many people will not have a fever. The only way to know for certain if your illness is caused by the flu virus is to have a specific flu test done by your doctor.

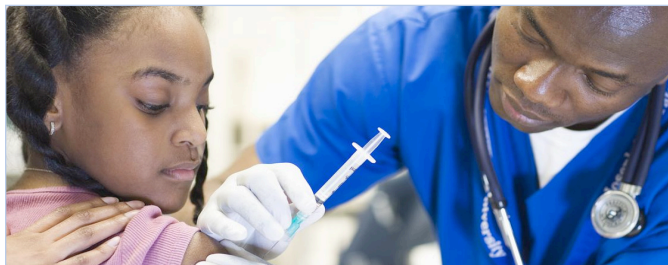
Everyone Needs To Get Vaccinated for the Flu Every Year

Because influenza viruses continually change, it is important to have a flu vaccination **every year**. Each year, a new flu vaccine is developed to fight the specific viruses that research indicates are most likely to cause illness during the upcoming season. The CDC recommends an injectable flu shot for the 2017–2018 season.

It takes up to two weeks for protection to develop after vaccination. Protection can last about a year. If you do get sick, a flu vaccination may make your illness milder.

Certain people have a greater need to get vaccinated every year. They are:

- People who are 50 years and older
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (such as lung or heart disease or diabetes)
- Children younger than 5 years, but especially those younger than 2 years old
- Pregnant women
- Nursing home residents
- It is extremely important for caregivers to get an annual flu vaccination to help protect the health of those for whom they provide care.



How to Stop the Flu from Spreading

While vaccination is the surest way to prevent the flu, there are other simple steps that can help prevent the spread of flu and other germs that make people sick.

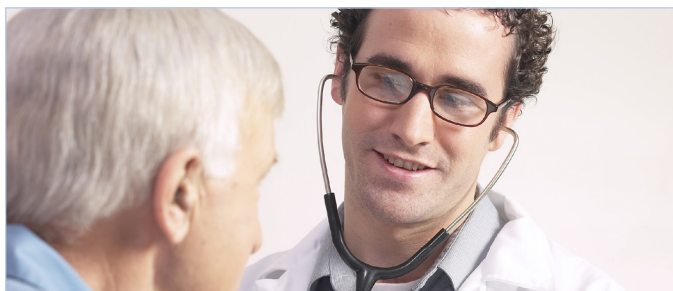
- Stay home from work or school if you have symptoms of the flu!
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Put your used tissue in the waste basket.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after coughing or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.

If You Are Sick, Stay Home

Anyone who is sick with the flu should stay home from work, school, and other public places except to seek medical care or for other necessities. Staying home and resting can help people with flu feel better and will lessen the chance of spreading

flu to others. Most people will get over the flu at home by getting plenty of bed rest and drinking fluids to ensure they don't get dehydrated. Medicines to relieve fever and body aches can also help. Antiviral drugs can reduce symptoms, shorten the duration of the illness, and can prevent serious flu complications like pneumonia.

However, do not give aspirin to anyone 18 years of age or younger. Children who have the flu and take aspirin can get a severe illness called Reye Syndrome.



When to Seek Medical Help

Some people should seek prompt treatment (within 48 hours of the onset of illness) if they develop symptoms of flu-like illness.

The people at risk for complications are:

- Children or adults with a disability, such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, or developmental disability
- Children younger than 2 years old
- Young people under the age of 19 years who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- Women who are pregnant
- Adults 50 years and older
- People of any age who have a chronic medical condition, such as asthma, neuromuscular disease, diabetes, heart disease, or chronic respiratory disease
- People with suppressed immune systems, such as those with HIV or who take medicines that weaken the immune system

Important: anyone who becomes sick with flu-like illness should seek medical treatment if his or her symptoms are **very severe** or **quickly worsen** or **improve but return** with a worse cough or fever.

What to Watch for

Some people can become extremely ill with the flu and need emergency medical care. If you or a child in your household becomes sick and exhibits any of these warning signs, seek emergency medical care immediately.

For children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids (for example, if you notice fewer wet diapers or fewer trips to urinate than normal)
- Not waking up or not interacting normally
- Being so irritable they do not want to be held
- Fever with a rash

For adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Steps to Stay Healthy

To protect your health:

- ✓ Get vaccinated every year.
- ✓ Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.
- ✓ Wash your hands properly and often.
- ✓ Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- ✓ Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- ✓ Eat a healthy diet, get plenty of rest, and exercise regularly.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that could be contaminated with germs.

The information provided on this fact sheet is intended for your general knowledge only and is not a substitute for any medical advice or treatment from a health care professional.



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