

The Flu

Flu FAQ

What are the signs and symptoms of seasonal flu?

The symptoms seasonal flu include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, runny or stuffy nose, diarrhea, vomiting, dry cough, tiredness and weakness, headache, chills and fatigue. Severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been attributed to flu infection. Seasonal flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

Emergency Warning Signs

In children:

- High or prolonged fever
- Fast or troubled breathing
- Bluish or grey skin color
- Unable to drink enough fluids (dehydration)
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Changes in mental status such as difficulty waking up, not interacting, or seizures
- Improvement and then return of fever and worse cough
- Worsening of underlying chronic medical condition

In adults:

- High or prolonged fever
- Fast or trouble breathing
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Improvement and then return of fever and worse cough

How can someone with the flu infect someone else?

Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

What should I do to keep from getting the flu?

First and most important: wash your hands. Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Try not touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

What surfaces are most likely to be sources of contamination?

Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air. Germs can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.

How long can viruses live outside the body?

We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks. Frequent handwashing will help you reduce the chance of getting contamination from these common surfaces.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

- Get vaccinated. Vaccine is the best protection available against the flu. N1N1 is included in the seasonal flu vaccine this year.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also work well
- Avoid close contact with sick people
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- If you are sick with a flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.
- Follow public health advice such as "keeping your distance" from other people to lessen the spread of the flu.

What is the best way to keep from spreading the virus through coughing or sneezing?

If you are sick, limit your contact with other people as much as possible. Do not go to work or school if ill. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Put your used tissue in the waste basket. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do

not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

What is the best technique for washing my hands to avoid getting the flu?

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. Wash with soap and water. or clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner. we recommend that when you wash your hands -- with soap and warm water -- that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.