

Influenza (flu) Information



What is Influenza (flu)?

The flu is an infection caused by a virus. It involves the nose, throat, and lungs and can affect how you breathe. This can make you feel sick, and in some cases may be very dangerous. Some groups of people have a higher chance of getting sick including:

- Young children
- Adults older than 65 years old

The flu vaccine is the best way to stay healthy and lower the chance of you and your family becoming sick with the flu. So, it's important for you and your family to get a flu shot every year to stay healthy.

How does flu spread?

The flu spreads very easily. It can spread through the air by coughing, sneezing, and talking. Sometimes, people can get the flu by touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes after touching something with flu germs on it.

What are flu symptoms?

The flu can affect each person in a different way. Most people start to feel sick about two (2) days after they come in contact with the flu virus. The main symptoms are:

- fever
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle aches
- headaches
- feeling tired or weak
- vomiting and/or diarrhea

When is the flu season?

The flu virus can cause the most illness during the colder months of the year, usually from December to May. Since COVID-19 started, it has been harder to know exactly when flu season will be.

How can I protect myself or my child?

- **Get a flu vaccine (shot) every year** if you are 6 months or older. It is best to get it by the end of October. The shot can keep you from getting the flu or really sick from it.
- **Stay away from sick people.** If someone is sick, try not to get too close to them. If you are sick, try to not be around others.
- **Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze.** Put the tissue in the trash after use.
- **Wash your hands with soap and water** often. If you do not have soap and water, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth** with your hands.

Quality/Infection Prevention

- Clean things that might have germs on them. If you touch something that might be dirty, clean it with anti-bacterial wipes.
- Stay home if you are sick. Wait at least one day (24 hours) after your fever is gone before you go out again. Only go out if you need to see the doctor or get things you really need.

What are the differences between Flu and COVID-19?

Flu and COVID-19 are both illnesses that affect how we breathe, but they come from different germs. COVID-19 spreads easier than the flu and can make some people very sick. It might take longer for people with COVID-19 to feel sick (up to 14 days) and they can spread it to other people for a long time. Since the symptoms can look the same, doctors need to do special tests to know which one it is.

For more information about the flu and COVID-19, visit these links from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

[Flu Symptoms](#)

[COVID-19 Symptoms](#)

What can I expect when I or my child are in the hospital?

When you are in the hospital, there are important things everyone does to stop the flu from spreading:

- **Wash your hands:** The doctors and nurses might show you how to clean your hands the right way.
- **Staying in Your Room:** If you are sick, you might need to stay in your room so you do not give the flu to others. Doctors and nurses will wear a gown, gloves, a mask and will wash their hands if they come in your room.
- **Stay home** if you are feeling sick/not feeling well.
- **Cleaning:** The hospital staff will clean all areas, especially things that people touch a lot, to keep germs away.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Influenza (Flu)*.

www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm