

Key Facts About Influenza and Influenza Vaccine

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccination each year. Some people, such as the elderly, young children, and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk for serious flu complications.

Symptoms of Flu

Symptoms of Flu include:

fever (usually high)	runny or stuffy nose
headache	muscle aches
extreme tiredness	stomach symptoms, such as nausea
dry cough	vomiting, and diarrhea, also can
sore throat	occur but are more common in
	children than adults.

Complications of Flu

Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes.

How Flu Spreads

Flu viruses spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 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.**

Preventing the Flu: Get Vaccinated

The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccination each year which can be through a shot or nasal spray vaccine. Use a tissue when you sneeze or cough, wash your hands with soap and water, avoid prolonged periods of contact with people who are showing flu symptoms, stay home from work or school if you are symptomatic, and avoid touching your nose, eyes or mouth.

If You Are Diagnosed With The Flu:

- Anti-viral drugs can be effective in the treatment of the flu, but consult your physician
- Rest
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Proper diet
- Take over counter medications to relieve symptoms as directed by your physician