

FLU: GET THE FACTS

What are the symptoms?

Influenza (flu) can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Flu symptoms usually come on suddenly. People who have flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- muscle or body aches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

How can I prevent getting it?

- The first and most important step in preventing flu is to get a flu vaccine each year. Flu vaccine has been shown to reduce flu related illnesses and the risk of serious flu complications that can result in hospitalization or even death.
- It is recommended that everyone 6 months of age and older should get the flu vaccine.
- CDC also recommends everyday preventive actions (like staying away from people who are sick, covering coughs and sneezes and frequent handwashing) to help slow the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses, like flu.

How is it spread?

- Influenza viruses are spread when a person who has influenza coughs, sneezes, or speaks which releases viruses into the air where other people can inhale the viruses. When these viruses enter the nose, throat, or lungs of a person, they begin to multiply, causing disease.
- The viruses may also be spread when a person touches a surface with flu viruses on it and then touches their nose or mouth.
- People with flu are most contagious in the first 3-4 days after their illness begins. Some adults are able to infect others beginning as soon as 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5-7 days after becoming sick.

Who's at higher risk for the flu?

Some individuals are more likely to get flu complications that can result in hospitalization and sometimes death. Specific high-risk groups include:

- Adults aged 65 years and older
- Children younger than 5 years of age, specifically those younger than 2 years
- Pregnant women
- Individuals with chronic health conditions including asthma, heart disease and stroke, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, cancer, children with neurologic conditions

Questions? Call 269-373-5203

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