



This years FLU season is proving to be the worst in nearly a decade.

Protect yourself, your family and your coworkers.

What is Influenza (also called Flu)? - The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. 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 vaccine each year.

Signs and Symptoms of Flu - People who have the flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms that usually start suddenly, not gradually:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills (* it's important to note that not everyone with flu with have fever)
- A cough
- A sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in young children than in adults.

How Flu Spreads - Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by tiny droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

Period of Contagiousness - You may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick. Although people with the flu are most contagious in the first 3-4 days after their illness begins, 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. Although people with the flu are most contagious in the first 3-4 days after their illness begins, some otherwise healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day *before* symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days *after* becoming sick. Some people, especially young children and people with weakened

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immune systems, might be able to infect others with flu viruses for an even longer time.

Onset of Symptoms - The time from when a person is exposed to the flu virus and infected to when symptoms begin is about 1 to 4 days, with an average of about 2 days.

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

People at High Risk from Flu - Anyone can get the flu (even healthy people), and serious problems related to the flu can happen at any age, but some people are at high risk of developing serious flu-related complications if they get sick. This includes people 65 years and older, people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), pregnant women, and young children.

Preventing Seasonal Flu - The first and most important step in preventing flu is to get a flu vaccination each year. 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 (nose, throat, and lungs) illnesses, like flu.

Diagnosing Flu - It is very difficult to distinguish the flu from other viral or bacterial causes of respiratory illnesses on the basis of symptoms alone. There are tests available to diagnose flu. More information is available: Diagnosing Flu.

Treating Flu - There are influenza antiviral drugs that can be used to treat flu illness.

More information is available: “Seasonal Influenza, More Information.”

Why get a Flu vaccine? - Yearly flu vaccination is the best tool currently available to protect against Influenza (flu), a serious disease which sickens millions of people each year.


The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccination as the first and most important step in protecting against flu and its potentially serious complications. Millions of people have safely received flu vaccines for decades. Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors’ visits, and missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations.

Reasons to get a flu vaccine

Flu vaccination can keep you from getting sick from flu. Flu vaccination can reduce the risk of flu-associated hospitalization, including among children and older adults. A 2014 study showed that flu vaccine reduced children’s risk of flu-related pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) admission by 74% during flu seasons from 2010-2012. Another study published in the summer of 2016 showed that people 50 years and older who got a flu vaccine reduced their risk of getting hospitalized from flu by 57%.

Flu vaccination is an important preventive tool for people with chronic health conditions. A 2013 study showed flu vaccination was associated with lower rates of some cardiac events among people with heart disease, especially among those who had a cardiac event in the past year. Flu vaccination also has been shown to be associated with reduced hospitalizations among people with diabetes (79%) and chronic lung disease (52%).





Vaccination helps protect women during and after pregnancy. Getting vaccinated also protects the baby several months after birth. A study that looked at flu vaccine effectiveness in pregnant women found that vaccination reduced the risk of flu-associated acute respiratory infection by about one half. There are studies that show that flu vaccination in a pregnant woman can reduce the risk of flu illness in her baby by up to half. This protective benefit was observed for several months after birth.

A 2017 study was the first of its kind to show that flu vaccination can significantly reduce a child's risk of dying from influenza. Flu vaccination also may make your illness milder if you do get sick. Getting vaccinated yourself also protects people around you, including those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, older people, and people with certain chronic health conditions.

For more information, visit: www.cdc.gov/flu

