

What To Know About The Flu

While most people know what it *feels* like to have the flu, they may not fully understand *what* the flu is and how it is passed from one person to another. A little information about the flu can go a long way towards preventing it.

1. Influenza is a respiratory illness that is caused by flu viruses.
2. Flu symptoms usually start to appear one to four days after the virus gets into your body.
3. The flu is contagious and can be transferred to someone else one day before symptoms occur and up to five days after getting sick.
4. The flu virus is spread mainly through respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes.
5. Symptoms of the flu include sore throat, high fever, headaches, cough, muscle pains, and lethargy.
6. The flu can cause added medical complications for people in "High Risk" groups, such as the elderly and children.
7. Different strains of the flu emerge each year, meaning that flu vaccines must be altered yearly.
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10. Flu season can last anywhere from October to May.

Stay Clean and Healthy

One of the easiest ways to improve your chances of avoiding the flu is to keep in mind all of the things you can do to maintain your physical cleanliness. Since influenza is a contagious virus that can be transmitted through airborne germs, practicing good health habits can be a powerful preventative measure. Here are some tips:

The Mayo Clinic says that you should wash your hands thoroughly and often. Since your hands come into contact with many different objects during the day, they have a higher chance of attracting germs.

Discovery Health recommends that you try not to bring your hands close to your eyes, mouth or nose. If there are germs on your hands, putting them near your face is the surest way to get them in your system.

The CDC says that you should avoid close proximity to sick people.

While this is more for other people's benefit, it is always polite to cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze.

How to avoid the flu

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other measures to keep our distance from each other to lessen the spread of flu.



A Hand-Washing Tutorial

- 1. Wet hands with clean water and soap.**
- 2. Scrub all parts of your hands (including backs, between fingers, under nails) with a soapy lather as long as it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice (about 20 seconds).**
- 3. Rinse well.**
- 4. Dry using a paper towel (or at home, your own designated towel).**

If possible, turn off the faucet handle with your paper towel