

Influenza (Flu)

Information for the Public

What are the symptoms of flu?

Fever, chills, cough, runny or stuffy nose, feeling very tired, body aches, sore throat, and headache are common symptoms of flu. Not everyone with flu will have a fever. The flu can cause mild to severe illness. It is different from a cold and usually comes on suddenly.

How does the flu spread?

Flu spreads from person to person through droplets made when a person with flu coughs, sneezes, or talks.

If I got the flu or the flu vaccine last year, is that good enough?

Vaccination every year is recommended regardless of past vaccination or flu infection.

Does the flu have complications?

Yes. Complications include pneumonia, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes. Some individuals may get sinus and ear infections as complications from the flu.

How do I find out if I have the flu?

There are multiple tests that can detect flu viruses. See your provider for testing/diagnosis. Although testing is the only way to know if you have flu, your doctor may diagnose you based on your symptoms.

How soon will I get sick if I am exposed to the flu?

It takes about 1 to 4 days to get sick after you are exposed to flu. The average is about two days.

How long is a person with flu virus contagious?

Most healthy adults can spread flu to others from one day **before** symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days **after** becoming sick. Children may spread the virus for longer than seven days. People with flu are most contagious in the first 3 to 4 days after their illness begins.

Can the flu be treated?

Yes. There are influenza antiviral drugs that can be used to treat flu illness. People with severe flu illness or people with underlying diseases should talk to their doctor about these antiviral drugs.

Adapted from CDC information.
