

Three Kinds of Flu

Seasonal Flu

Seasonal flu is caused by human influenza viruses. It spreads through coughs or sneezes from infected people. Each year, about 36,000 Americans die from seasonal flu. Young children, the elderly, and people with chronic health problems are at greatest risk for flu complications. The annual flu shot is the best protection against seasonal flu.

Avian (Bird) Flu

Avian (bird) flu refers to flu viruses usually found in birds, but infections can occur in humans. The risk is generally low to most people because the viruses do not usually infect humans. Since 1997, more than 270 people in the world have been infected with avian flu H5N1, mostly through close contact with infected birds. Currently, no human vaccine for avian flu H5N1 is available.

Pandemic Flu

Pandemic influenza refers to any **new** type of influenza virus, for which individuals do not have protection, thus having the potential to cause a worldwide outbreak. Past pandemics have caused high rates of illness, hospitalization, and death in all age groups. Health officials are concerned that avian flu *could* cause a pandemic, but right now there is no flu pandemic.

www.dadehealth.org

Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

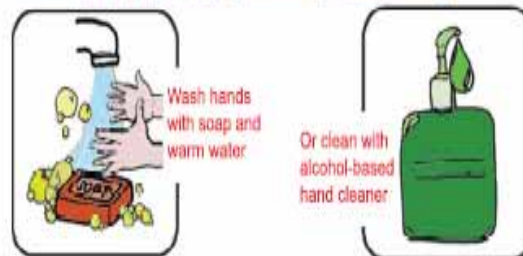
Seasonal Influenza

Cover Your Cough




Clean Your hands

after coughing or sneezing



Source: CDC - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Office of Epidemiology and Disease Control

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Seasonal Influenza (The Flu)



Miami-Dade County Health Department

What is seasonal influenza?

Seasonal influenza, commonly called the flu, is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus, which infects the nose, throat, and lungs. Unlike other respiratory infections, such as the common cold, the flu may cause severe illness and life-threatening complications.

What are the symptoms of seasonal flu?

Symptoms include fever, headache, tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose and muscle aches. Children can have nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, but these symptoms are uncommon in adults. Although the term "stomach flu" is sometimes used to describe vomiting, nausea or diarrhea, these illnesses are caused by pathogens and are rarely related to flu.

When is the flu season in the United States?

The peak of flu season can occur anywhere from late December through March. The overall health impact (e.g., infections, hospitalizations, and deaths) of a flu season varies from year to year.

How does the flu spread?

Influenza viruses are spread from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. The viruses can also be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or an object and then touches his/her own mouth or nose before washing their hands.

Does the flu have complications?

Yes. Some complications include pneumonia, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as heart failure, asthma, or diabetes. Children may get sinus problems and ear infections as complications. Those aged 65

years and older and persons of any age with chronic medical conditions are at highest risk for serious complications

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

The time from when a person is exposed to flu virus to when symptoms begin is about one to four days, with an average of two days.

How long is a person with the flu contagious?

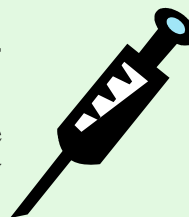
Most healthy adults may be able to infect others from 1 day prior to becoming sick and for 5 days after they first develop symptoms. Some young children and people with weakened immune systems may be contagious for longer than a week.

How many people get sick or die from the flu every year?

On average, 5% to 20% of U.S. residents get the flu, and more than 200,000 persons are hospitalized for flu-related complications each year. About 36,000 Americans die per year from complications of flu.

What can I do to protect myself against the flu?

By far, the best way to prevent the flu is to get a vaccination every year.



Who should be vaccinated?

- Children aged 6-59 months
- Pregnant women
- People 50 years of age and older
- People with certain chronic

- medical conditions
- Healthcare workers
- People in nursing homes and other long term care facilities
- People who live with or care for those at high risk (children, pregnant women, elderly and ill)

What are other steps that can be taken to prevent the flu?



- *Avoid close contact* with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others.
- *Stay home* from work when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- *Cover your mouth and nose* with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- *Wash your hands* often.
- *Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.* Flu can spread when a person touches something that is contaminated and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

How should the flu be treated?

- Rest
- Drink plenty of liquids
- Avoid using alcohol and tobacco
- Visit your doctor to seek treatment if symptoms worsen

In some cases, your doctors may choose to use antiviral drugs to treat the flu. Influenza is caused by a virus and therefore antibiotics do not cure it.