

The Flu: Good Health Habits

Keeping Yourself Healthy and Flu-Free

The flu [influenza] is a contagious respiratory illness. It is caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

Flu is unpredictable. How severe it is can vary widely from one season to the next. For this reason, it is important that you and your family are protected as the flu season begins.

1. Get a flu vaccine.

The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine each season. The vaccine is available as a shot or nasal spray.

While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine protects against the three viruses that research suggests will be most common.

2. Avoid close contact.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

3. Stay home when you are sick.

If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

You should 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.)

4. Cover your nose and mouth.

Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze, or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby.

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

This may keep those around you from getting sick.

5. Clean your hands.

Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub. This will help protect you from germs.

6. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, & mouth.

Germs spread this way. A person might also get the flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or possibly their nose.

7. Practice other good health habits.

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

If you or someone you know is having a problem, contact MHNNet—help is available!

People who Should Get a Flu Shot

- Children 6 to 23 months old
- Anyone age 50 or older
- Women who will be in their second or third trimester of pregnancy during flu season
- People of all ages with heart or lung disease (including asthma), diabetes, kidney disorders, anemia, or an immune deficiency caused by cancer treatment, steroids (prednisone), or (HIV/AIDS)
- Anyone who comes in close contact with the people listed above
- Anyone who wants to reduce the chance of catching the flu
- Healthcare workers

People who Should Not Get a Flu Shot

- Anyone with a serious allergy to chicken eggs
- Anyone who has had a serious reaction to a previous dose of influenza vaccine
- People who are allergic to thimerosal, a preservative used in the vaccine
- People with a history of Guillain-Barre syndrome
- Babies younger than 6 months

Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/> to find out what to do if you or a family member gets sick with the flu.

Source: www.cdc.gov, Workplace Options, Life Advantages, Parlay International