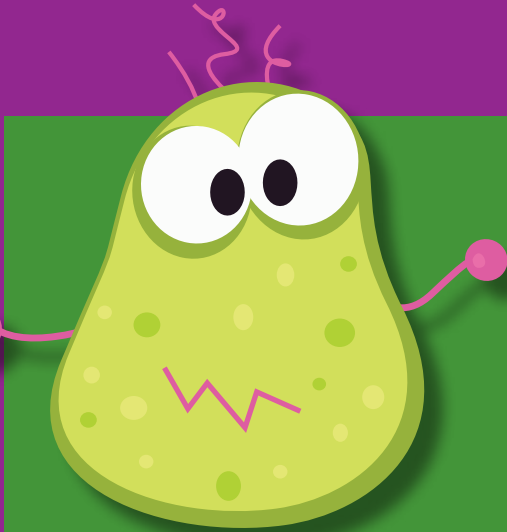


What is Flu?



The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness and at times lead to death.

Flu Symptoms

Flu attacks the respiratory tract in humans (nose, throat and lungs). The flu is different from a cold. Flu usually comes on suddenly and can include these symptoms:

- Fever
- Headache
- Tiredness (can be extreme)
- Dry Cough
- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion
- Body aches

These symptoms are usually referred to as “flu-like symptoms.”

How Flu Spreads

The flu is spread in respiratory droplets caused by coughing and sneezing. It usually spreads from person-to-person, though occasionally a person may become infected by touching something with virus on it and then touching his or her own mouth or nose.

People with influenza may be able to infect others beginning one day before getting symptoms and for up to seven days after getting sick. That means you can give someone the flu before you know you're sick, as well as while you're sick. This is why it is so important to get the flu vaccine.

Complications

Young children and people with certain health conditions are among those at higher risk for serious flu complications.

The flu can cause sinus problems or ear infections in children. Other complications caused by flu include bacterial pneumonia, dehydration and worsening of chronic medical conditions such as congestive heart failure, asthma or diabetes.

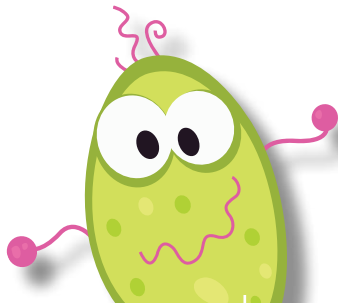
Is it a Cold or the Flu?

Influenza (flu) is like a cold in many ways – basically, they're both respiratory infections caused by viruses.

Some of the symptoms of a cold and the flu are similar, but the two diseases can usually be told apart. Check your symptoms and ask your medical provider for advice.

But what about nausea, vomiting and diarrhea? Occasionally, you can have these symptoms with flu, but if you have these symptoms alone, you likely have a stomach virus called gastroenteritis.





Is it a Cold or the Flu?

SYMPTOMS	COLD	FLU
Fever	Rare in adults and older children, but can be as high as 102°F in infants and small children	Can be minimal or as high as 104°F and can last 3-4 days
Headache	Rare	Sudden onset and can be severe
Muscle aches	Mild	Usual and often severe
Tiredness and weakness	Mild	Can last 2 or more weeks
Extreme exhaustion	Rarely	Sudden onset and can be severe
Runny nose	Often	Sometimes
Sneezing	Often	Sometimes
Sore throat	Often	Sometimes
Cough	Mild hacking	Usual and cough can become severe

Preventing the Flu – What You Can Do to Stay Healthy

- Get a flu vaccine every year.
- Stay informed. Follow the latest news from reliable sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth – germs enter your body this way.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you get sick to prevent others from catching your illness.
- Other good habits, such as getting plenty of sleep, exercising regularly, drinking plenty of water and eating healthy foods, will also help you stay healthy.
- Clean hands often.
- Practice good cough and sneezing etiquette

Cough and Sneezing Etiquette:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Throw the tissue in the trash.
- If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve – not your hands.
- Clean hands often.



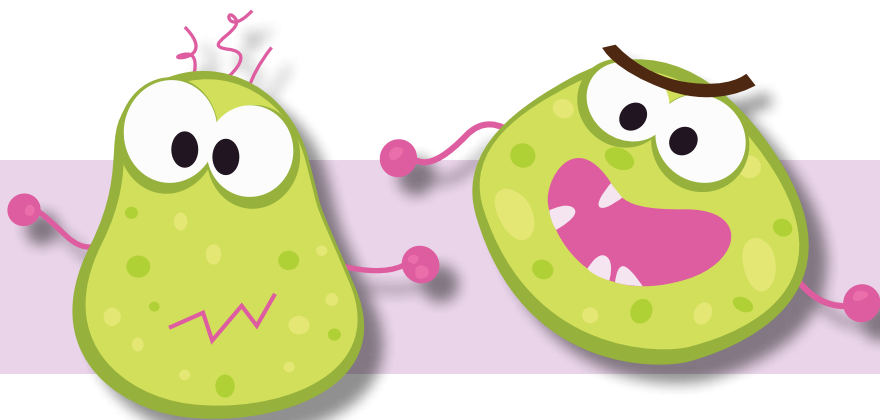
Visiting the Hospital

- Please do not visit the hospital if you have symptoms of flu or gastroenteritis.
- Please try to avoid bringing children to visit patients in the hospital during this season.
- If you must bring a child to visit, please check with a nurse so the child may be screened. It is best to screen your child 24 hours before their visit.

Treating the Flu

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink plenty of liquids (water, soup, tea, etc.)
- Avoid use of alcohol and tobacco.
- Consider acetaminophen or ibuprofen to reduce fever and relieve pain. Medications to relieve other flu symptom—like cough suppressants and nasal decongestants—may not be appropriate for younger children. Check with your pediatrician before using these medications.
- Do NOT give a child aspirin!
- Talk to a doctor about antiviral medications
- Antibiotics do not cure the flu. Occasionally you may develop a bacterial infection along with the flu that may require treatment with an antibiotic.
- Avoid close contact (hugging, kissing, shaking hands, drinking from the same cup) with others.
- Stay home from work, school, church, sporting events, libraries, shopping centers, grocery stores, restaurants, etc.
- Clean your hands frequently and use a fresh tissue every time you blow your nose, cough or sneeze. Safely dispose of the tissue right away and clean your hands immediately.





What to do if you have flu-like symptoms and...

...you are NOT at high-risk for complications*

- Stay home until your fever is gone for 24 hours without using medicine. Don't go to a hospital. Call your medical provider if concerned

...you are having severe illness, like difficulty breathing, regardless of whether you are high-risk.

- Call 911 or go to a hospital right away. Tell them you may have influenza.

...you ARE high risk-for complications*

- Call your medical provider right away to discuss antiviral medicines and whether a visit is needed.

**People at high risk of flu complications include people under the age of 2 or over the age of 65; people under 19 years of age on long-term aspirin; people with chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), hepatic, hematological (including sickle cell), neurologic or metabolic (including diabetes) disorders, people who are immunosuppressed (HIV, transplant), and pregnant women.*



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WHAT IS FLU?

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