

Flu Prevention and Treatment Tips

Influenza, or the “flu,” is a contagious respiratory illness. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Older adults, young children, and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk for serious flu complications.

The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu shot every year at the start of the flu season (later summer/early fall).

Stop the spread of all flu viruses with these simple precautions:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water -- especially after you sneeze or cough, and before you eat
- Use an alcohol-based hand gel to clean your hands if you don't have access to soap and water
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue in the garbage
- Cough or sneeze into the upper part of your sleeve if you don't have a tissue
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are coughing or otherwise appear sick

If you get sick with flu-like symptoms, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care.

The following page has some basic steps that can help protect you against the flu, and help lower your risk of complications if you do get it.

What to Do if You Get the Flu

CALL YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

If you or someone you care for has a fever, chills, aches, a sore throat, cough or other flu symptoms, call your healthcare provider immediately. A healthcare provider can write a prescription for one of two antiviral drugs, oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) or zanamivir (Relenza®). These can help your body fight the flu and other viruses. These antiviral medications work differently than vaccines or antibiotics and need to be taken according to your healthcare provider's directions. They work best if taken early in the illness, so call your provider as soon as possible.

STAY HOME

If you think you might have the flu, stay home until it's been seven days since your symptoms began, or until you've been symptom-free for 24 hours. This will keep you from infecting others and spreading the virus further. In fact, until you're free of symptoms, you should avoid travel —unless you need to make a trip to a healthcare provider.

CATCH UP ON SOME MUCH NEEDED R&R

As your body fights off the flu it is best to get enough sleep and to drink plenty of fluids. Juice, water, and soup are great ways to stay hydrated. But avoid caffeinated drinks, which won't hydrate you as well.

MAKE YOURSELF AS COMFORTABLE AS POSSIBLE

You might be cold one minute and hot the next, and wearing several layers —like a T-shirt, sweatshirt, and robe— makes it easy to add or remove clothes as needed.

LOOK OUT FOR EMERGENCY WARNING SIGNS

Call your doctor or go to the emergency room immediately if you have any of these symptoms:

- High or prolonged fever
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest
- Near-fainting or fainting
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

FOLLOW ADVICE FROM HEALTH OFFICIALS

You can find up-to-date information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>.

From the Office of:

Phone Number:

Patient Name:

Notes:

Your Next Appointment: