

It's about that time again...Flu Season!

What is the 'flu'?

Influenza, more commonly known as the **flu**, is a respiratory virus. The flu can be a mild to serious illness, and at times can lead to death. Usually the flu lasts from a couple days to less than two weeks. The best means of prevention is to get the flu shot each year. Every year in the U.S. **5%-20%** of the population **get the flu**, more than **200,000** people are **hospitalized** from complications, and **about 36,000 die** from the flu. There are some complications of the flu which can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes. The best time to get vaccinated is in October or November before the flu season officially begins. Though getting vaccinated later can be beneficial. The flu season usually begins as early as October and last through May.

The **flu** usually comes on suddenly with some or all of these **symptoms**:



- Fever
- Headache
- Extreme tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea



Spreading the FLU:

The flu is mainly spread through respiratory droplets from through sneezing or coughing. Another way of getting the flu is by touching something with flu viruses on it then touching your mouth or nose. Most people can begin to spread the flu **one day before** symptoms start. Individuals can spread the flu up to **five days after** becoming sick.

If you get the flu. . .

Be sure to get plenty of **rest**. Over doing it can cause the virus to be more intense. You need to rest and allow your body to build strength to beat the virus. **Drink plenty of liquids** so you do not become dehydrated, which usually leads to hospitalization. **Avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco**. The use of these can break down your immune system and allow the virus to become more intense. **Take medication to relieve flu symptoms**. Unfortunately, there is not a medication to help fight the flu, only to relieve some of the symptoms.

Flu PREVENTION:

1. **Avoid close contact** with individuals who are sick and when you are sick.
2. **Stay home when you are sick.**
3. **Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing.**
4. **Clean your hands thoroughly.**
5. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.**
6. **Practice other good health habits;** get plenty of sleep, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious foods.

Wash Your Hands

Prevent Colds and Flu from affecting YOU!

It's cold and flu season. So, what can you do to prevent these viruses from making you sick? The answer is simple; **wash your hands!**

Follow these steps to make sure you wash your hands the correct way:

1. Use Warm Water



2. Scrub hands for 15-20 seconds

The amount of time it takes to sing 'Happy Birthday to You.' Make sure you get all surfaces of your hands clean - under fingernails, palms, backs of hands, between fingers, etc.



3. Rinse Hands Thoroughly

4. Dry Hands with a *paper towel*



5. Turn water off *using* the paper towel

This will prevent the germs on the faucet from getting back on your hands.

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