

# Influenza

Influenza is also called the flu or seasonal flu. It is an infection that starts in the nose, throat and lungs and spreads to the whole body. Flu virus is spread through coughing and sneezing by people with the flu. The flu also spreads when a person touches a surface or an object with flu virus on it and then touches the eyes, nose or mouth.

## Signs

You may have some or all of these signs:

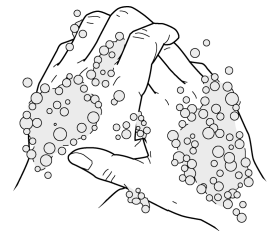
- Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (F) or 38 degrees Celsius (C) or greater
- Cough or sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headache
- Feeling very tired
- Sore or aching muscles
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chills

## If you have the flu:

If you are sick with the flu, protect yourself and limit the spread of the flu:

- Take flu medicine as directed, if ordered by your doctor. Be sure to take the medicine as many days as your doctor ordered.
  - ▶ Call your doctor's office or health clinic if you have any side effects to the medicine such as nausea, vomiting or a rash.
- Take a fever reducing medicine such as acetaminophen, also called Tylenol, or ibuprofen, also called Motrin or Advil. Ask for help in reading the label for the amount to take and how often to take it.

- Take over the counter medicine for cough and runny nose as needed until you feel better. Ask for help in reading the label for the amount to take and how often.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink at least 8 to 10 glasses of fluids each day such as water, broth or sports drinks such as Gatorade or Powerade.
- If you have vomiting or diarrhea:
  - ▶ Drink plenty of fluids. Take small sips throughout the day to ease nausea.
  - ▶ Eat foods such as toast, rice, crackers, applesauce, bananas or low sugar dry cereals.
- Use a cool-mist humidifier to ease breathing. Humidifiers must be washed with soap and warm water each day to keep them clean.
- Stay away from others as much as possible to prevent the spread of the flu.
- Wash your hands or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer often.
- Cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm, not your hands. If you have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away, and then wash your hands.



**Call your doctor right away if you have:**

- Chest pain or a deep cough with yellow or green mucus.
- Trouble breathing. The flu can cause pneumonia.
- Severe neck pain or stiffness.
- Trouble thinking clearly.
- A fever that lasts more than 3 to 4 days or your temperature is over 100.4 degrees F or 38 degrees C.
- A temperature that keeps getting higher, even after taking medicine for it.
- Vomiting or diarrhea that lasts more than one day.

- Ear pain.
- Coughing that will not stop and it is hard to breathe.

## **Seasonal Flu Vaccine**

- Talk to your doctor about whether you should get the seasonal flu vaccine each year.
- **Do not** get the flu shot if you are allergic to eggs or have had an allergic reaction to a previous flu shot.
- **The flu shot cannot cause the flu.** You may have mild side effects from the shot, such as arm soreness, a slight fever and muscle aches.
- Contact your doctor or local health clinic for information about when and where to get a flu shot.

**Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.**