

FLU RISK AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is at high risk for getting the flu?

- Adults greater than 65
- Children less than 5 years of age with certain chronic medical conditions like neuro-developmental conditions, most commonly developmental delay or cerebral palsy, multiple neurologic conditions and other co morbidities.
- Greater than 5 years of age who did NOT have high risk conditions, but with higher risk like diabetes mellitus, chronic pulmonary conditions, sickle cell disease, cardiac abnormalities and immunosuppression.

2. What are the symptoms of the Flu?

The symptoms of the Flu are the following:

- Fever
- Sore Throat
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea and vomiting (occasionally)

3. What are the emergency signs of the flu?

The following symptoms are urgent/emergency signs for children/adults with flu that require immediate attention by a medical provider:

Children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath

- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

5. When should I get treated with an anti-viral for the Flu?

Most people can recover from the flu without medication. It may not be necessary to schedule an office visit with your physician in order to lessen the spread of the virus. There are certain populations that may need medication or who have the above symptoms that would require prompt treatment. It is recommended that one receive medication within 48-72 hours of symptoms. If you develop the flu it is recommended that you stay home at least 24 hours after you are free of a fever (temp greater than 101 degrees) without any fever reducing medication.

These groups are similar to those who are at increased risk for seasonal influenza-related complications:

- Children younger than 2 years old;
- Adults 65 years of age or older
- Pregnant women
- Persons with the following conditions:
 - Chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), renal, hepatic, hematological (including sickle cell disease), or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus);
 - Disorders that can compromise respiratory function or the handling of respiratory secretions or that can increase the risk for aspiration (e.g., cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders, or other neuromuscular disorders)
- Immunosuppression, including that caused by medications or by HIV;
- Persons younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy, because of an increased risk for Reye syndrome.

6. How can I treat the flu?

- Nasal saline drops for nasal congestion
- Cool mist humidifier
- Extra doses of Vitamin C: : 125 mg three times a day for children who weigh 20-29 pounds; 250 mg three times a day for those who weigh 30- 59 pounds and 500

mg three times a day for those who weigh more than 60 pounds. Effervescent, powdered forms of vitamin C make up into pleasant-tasting drinks. Give the supplements at the first sign of a cold. Avoid any products that contain artificial colors or sweeteners

- Ginger root tea: Boil water and add sliced ginger, allow to steep, and sweeten with honey and lemon.
- Astragalus 500mg bid
- Medicinal mushrooms (maitake, reishi)
- Vitamin D 1000mg/day
- Extra fluids
- Foods rich in anti-oxidants like multicolored vegetables, green tea,

7. How can I prevent getting the flu?

- Take common-sense steps to limit the spread of germs. Make good hygiene a habit.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you don't have a tissue.
- Put used tissues in a waste basket.
- Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.

Avoid close contact with others, especially those who might easily get the flu, such as people of any age with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), pregnant women, young children, and infants.

Wear a facemask – if available and tolerable – when sharing common spaces with other household members to help prevent spreading the virus to others. This is especially important if other household members are at high risk for complications from influenza.

Get plenty of rest.

Drink clear fluids such as water, broth, sports drinks, or electrolyte beverages made for infants to prevent becoming dehydrated.

Cover coughs and sneezes.

Clean hands with soap and water