

Treating the Flu

Do you have a fever or chills AND a cough or sore throat?

If “yes,” you may have the flu. Symptoms of the flu include fever or chills and cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms can include runny nose, body aches, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

Stay home and limit your contact with others.

- You will probably be sick for several days with a fever and respiratory symptoms.
- Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care, if needed, or other necessities. Your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- While you are sick, limit your contact with other people to keep from infecting them.
- Continue to wash your hands to keep from spreading germs to others.

If you are at higher risk for complications from the flu, contact your health care provider.

People at high risk for flu complications include pregnant women, young children and people with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes.

Medication can help.

- Take medications for symptom relief as needed for fever and pain such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®), and cough medicine. These medicines do not need to be taken regularly if your symptoms improve.
- Do **not** give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) or products that contain aspirin (e.g. bismuth subsalicylate – Pepto Bismol) to children or teenagers 18 years old or younger.
- Finish any antiviral medications you may be given. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that fight against the flu and can make your illness milder. Antiviral medicines are not given to all people during flu season because most people get better on their own and over-use can promote antiviral-resistant viruses.

Seek emergency care if needed.

If your **child** experiences any of the following, seek immediate medical attention:

- 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

In **adults**, emergency warning signs that need immediate attention:

- 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