

What's influenza (the flu)?

The flu is...

- ▶ ...a **contagious viral infection** of the respiratory tract (nose, throat, bronchial tubes, and lungs).
- ▶ The flu **usually comes on fast and can cause a wide range of symptoms**, including fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Some people may also experience diarrhea and vomiting.
- ▶ The flu usually last 5-7 days.
- ▶ The flu **varies in severity from mild to severe**. If you have a chronic health condition or are pregnant, you may be at higher risk for serious flu-related complications.

The flu isn't...

- ▶ ...a bacterial infection.
- ▶ ...a common cold. In general, colds are usually milder and don't last as long as flu symptoms. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose without a fever.

I don't like the sound of that.
What's the best way to avoid the
flu?



Don't be a sick puppy.

**Get your
flu shot.**

Public health specialists and primary care providers agree: ***the best way you can avoid getting the flu is by getting your flu shot.*** The vaccine is updated annually to protect against the types and strains of viruses most likely to be in circulation. ***Getting a flu vaccine does not give you the flu,*** and the risk of having a severe allergic reaction to the shot is less than 1 in 4 million.

What else can I do to prevent the spread of the flu?

Do what you usually do to stay healthy!

- ▶ **Wash your hands** often with soap and water. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when you don't have access to a sink.
- ▶ **Don't share** eating and drinking utensils, lip balms, solo cups, smoking/vaping paraphernalia, etc.
- ▶ **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
- ▶ **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs are spread when a person touches something that is contaminated and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth.
- ▶ **Take care of your immune system** by eating well, getting plenty of sleep, exercising, and managing stress.
- ▶ **Avoid things that tax your immune system**, such as alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.



All right, you've convinced me. How do I get my **FREE** flu shot?

It's simple!

- ▶ ***Go to health.cornell.edu/flu*** to get the latest info about what campus flu clinics/appointments are available.
- ▶ ***Flu clinics*** are offered across campus throughout the fall.



The Flu Feels Worse.

You, the Flu, & What to Do!

Cornell Health: 607-255-5155
health.cornell.edu/flu

I've got a pretty good immune system. If I skip my flu shot, I'm only putting myself at risk, right?

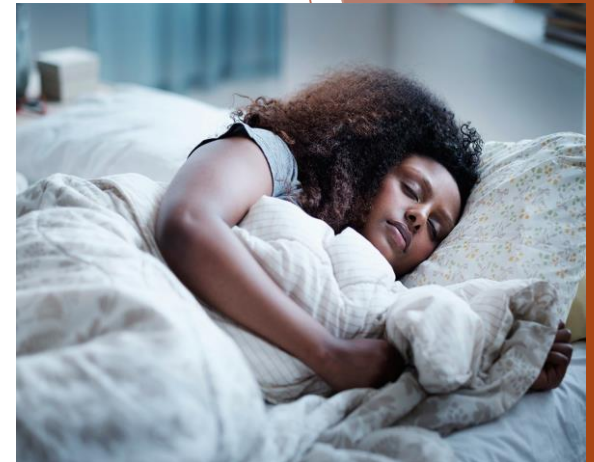


Not really. Have you heard of *herd immunity*? When you get vaccinated, you're not only protecting yourself from getting sick, you're also **protecting your community** (your "herd"). The more people get vaccinated, the harder it is for the flu to spread. Plus, it protects individuals who can't get vaccinated for health reasons.

Oh snap, I think I caught the flu. What should I do?

It's going to be okay; follow these tips to take care of yourself:

- ▶ **Rest up.** Sleep is the best thing you can do to recover. If you don't rest, it will take longer to recover fully.
- ▶ **Drink lots of clear liquids.** To avoid dehydration, drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water, broth, herbal tea, Gatorade, or another non-caffeinated, non-carbonated beverage daily.
- ▶ **Eat well.** Your immune system needs the support of adequate nutrition to recover. Bland foods may be the most palatable.
- ▶ **Monitor your temperature.** Be aware that you are most contagious when you have a fever.
- ▶ **Treat symptoms.** You may recover more comfortably by taking non-prescription medications to treat symptoms: ibuprofen, acetaminophen, throat lozenges, decongestants (check out the pharmacy at Cornell Health). Do NOT take aspirin or aspirin-containing medicines. When in doubt, call Cornell Health and consult with the on-call provider.
- ▶ **Antibiotic treatment is not effective treatment for the flu,** because the flu is caused by a virus not bacteria. Antiviral treatment may be recommended for individuals with specific health concerns.



How can I not be “that kid” who gets everyone else sick?

Here's what you can do:

- ▶ ***Stay home*** from class, work, parties, etc. until you have been fever-free for at least 24 hours. (If you're fever-free because of fever-reducing medicines, it doesn't count!)
- ▶ ***Keep distance*** (about 6 feet) between yourself and others while you're sick.
- ▶ ***Cover your mouth and nose*** with a tissue when coughing or sneezing to keep those around you from getting your germs.



How do I know if I need to seek medical care?

Usually *the flu will run its course* and you'll feel better within about a week. However, call Cornell Health if you have a chronic health condition or if your *symptoms worsen or complications develop*, including:

- ▶ Difficulty breathing
- ▶ Pain or pressure in the chest or stomach
- ▶ Dizziness
- ▶ Confusion or change in level of consciousness
- ▶ Persistent vomiting
- ▶ Difficulty swallowing
- ▶ Symptoms improve but then return or worsen
- ▶ Rash
- ▶ Fever of over 100°F lasting for more than three days or a fever above 103°F
- ▶ Any other symptom that concerns you



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