

SICK SEASON



COLD AND FLU FACTS

- The common cold and influenza (flu) are both respiratory illnesses caused by any one of several hundred different viruses
- Most viruses can survive **1 hour** outside the body on various surfaces
- Many viruses can survive up to **18 hours** outside the body
- Flu is more common during November through April
 - Flu symptoms are severe and come on suddenly, often with body aches, fever, extreme fatigue, dry cough, headache, and sore throat
- Colds are more common during September through May
 - Cold symptoms are milder and often start with a sore throat, runny nose, and congestion
- Since both colds and the flu are viral illnesses, they cannot be treated with antibiotics
 - **Antibiotics are not effective against viruses**
- Both colds and the flu are generally contagious starting **1 day before** symptoms appear and **5 to 7 days after** symptoms appear
 - Children and individuals with weakened immune systems may be contagious longer

COLD AND FLU PREVENTION

- Wash your hands frequently
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Routinely wipe down phones, workstations, door knobs, and any objects you or others touch
- Get a flu shot every year
- Stay home if you are sick
- When sneezing, cover your nose with a tissue or sneeze into your arm to contain germs
- Stay hydrated, eat nutritious foods, and get plenty of rest
- Keep alcohol-based hand sanitizer with you or nearby

Source: Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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WHAT IS THE FLU?

Influenza (flu) is a contagious virus that affects the respiratory system. Its severity can range from mild to even deadly. Flu is spread via droplets when an infected individual coughs, sneezes, or even talks.

The easiest way to prevent the spread of flu is to get vaccinated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual influenza vaccination for all individuals six months and older (with rare exceptions).

You should not get a flu shot if...

- You have an allergy to eggs or any ingredients in the flu vaccine
- You have a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome
- You are feeling unwell or as if you are coming down with a cold

Signs and symptoms of flu include...

- Fever (often, but not always)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny and/or congested nose
- Body aches
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea (common in children)

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention