

## Flu Prevention and Severe Illness Symptoms

### Prevention

#### 1. Get a flu shot.

The single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated each year. It's not too late to get your shot. Check with the local Health Department, your family physician, local pharmacy or supermarket for vaccine information and availability.

#### 2. Cover your mouth and nose.

Sneeze or cough into the crook of your elbow or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

#### 3. Clean your hands.

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

#### 4. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

#### 5. Stay home when you are sick.

If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

#### 6. Avoid close contact.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.



### Severe Illness Symptoms—When to seek medical attention

There are several emergency warning signs of the flu that require **urgent** medical attention. In **children** they are:

- High or prolonged fever
- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Changes in mental status, such as not waking up or not interacting; being so irritable that the child does not want to be held; or seizures
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions (heart or lung disease, diabetes)

## Flu Prevention and Severe Illness Symptoms

### Severe Illness Symptoms—When to seek medical attention (continued)

There are several emergency warning signs of the flu that require **urgent** medical attention. For **adults** the signs are:

- High or prolonged fever
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest
- Near-fainting or fainting
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

**Seek medical care immediately**, either by calling your doctor or going to an emergency room, if you or someone you know is experiencing any of the signs described above.



### Monitoring flu activity

CDC and other partners collect, compile and in many cases, analyze information on flu activity year round in the United States. The U.S. influenza surveillance system is a collaborative effort between CDC and its many partners in state and local health departments, public health and clinical laboratories, vital statistics offices, physicians, and clinics and emergency departments.

There are several state and federal websites that will allow you to monitor flu activity in your area.

- CDC's—FluView Interactive — [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- Google Flu Trends — [www.google.org/flutrends/](http://www.google.org/flutrends/)
- Maryland's Flu Watch— [dhmh.maryland.gov](http://dhmh.maryland.gov)
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services— [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)