



MEDICAL CONDITIONS

PREVENTING FLU

Influenza is a viral infection of the respiratory tract that causes symptoms like a cough, sore throat, and headache. Colds and flu have similar symptoms, but flu can be much more serious than a cold.

When someone who has flu coughs or sneezes, droplets containing the virus are released into the air and can infect people nearby. The flu virus can also survive on objects like door handles and telephones for up to three hours, so if you touch something that an infected person has touched, you can become infected.

Basic hygiene practices will help to prevent and curb the spread of flu:

- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, using a tissue, a sleeve, or even your hand. Make sure you dispose of dirty tissues, preferably in an incinerator, and wash your hands.
- Wipe down surfaces frequently. Wash your hands often. Make sure you wash your hands after going to the bathroom, after touching anything in public spaces, after playing with your children, and before cooking or eating.
- Don't touch your face, or put your hands in your mouth, eyes or nose as you may have picked up the virus from something without knowing.

- Make sure you wash your hands with soap and warm water, or with an alcohol gel for at least 20 seconds.
- Try to avoid contact with sick people, and if you are ill, stay away from other people. Don't go to work if you are ill. Stay at home and recover, and don't expose your colleagues to the virus.
- Keep your immune system healthy. Eat a balanced diet, get regular exercise, and sleep enough so your immune system can work at its optimal.

What to do if you get sick:

If you develop symptoms like a fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches or chills you should:

- Avoid contact with others, and practice good hygiene.
- Seek medical attention if necessary, either from your doctor or a pharmacist.
- Rest, keep warm, and get lots of sleep.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take medication (either prescribed or over-the-counter) to relieve the symptoms. Anti-viral medications can be prescribed to people who are at risk of suffering from severe flu, like pregnant women, young children, people 65 and older, and people with certain chronic medical conditions.