

THE CAMPAIGN TO **IMMUNYZE** ALL NEW YORKERS

What is “The Flu?”

Seasonal influenza, “the flu,” is caused by a virus. Anyone, at any age, can get the flu. The virus infects your respiratory tract - nose, throat and lungs. Unlike the common cold, the flu can cause you to become very sick or even cause life-threatening conditions. There are different strains of the flu virus circulating each year, so each flu season is different. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year. Stay up to date on the seasonal flu at www.immunize.org



When is the Flu Season?

Flu can occur at any time of the year, but commonly peaks between December and February. It can begin as early as October and continue to May. Flu viruses are constantly changing. They can change from one season to the next or even change during the flu season. Some flu seasons are mild and some are severe, but every year you can be at risk of coming down with the flu.



The flu vaccine typically protects against multiple strains of the flu. Even if the vaccine is not an exact match, the vaccine still has benefits. Receiving your annual flu vaccine can reduce how sick you actually become.

Who Should Receive the Vaccine?

Everyone aged six months and older should receive their flu shot.

There are very few exceptions. Talk to your doctor if you have any questions on which flu vaccine option is best for you and your family.

You can also visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/whoshouldvax.htm#egg-allergy> to find out more information on the types of vaccinations and which might be best for you.

www.immunize.com

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How the Flu Spreads:

Flu can spread from person to person, from up to six feet away. Flu is spread when people sneeze, cough or talk or by touching a surface with flu virus on it and then touching your own mouth or nose. Healthy adults may be able to infect others from 1 day before symptoms start and up to 5 to 7 days after they become sick. Children can spread the virus for longer than 7 days. Since symptoms start 1 to 4 days after you're infected, you can spread the flu before you know you're sick. Some infected people may not even have symptoms – but they can still spread the flu virus.



Symptoms of the Flu:

The flu usually comes on suddenly.

People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

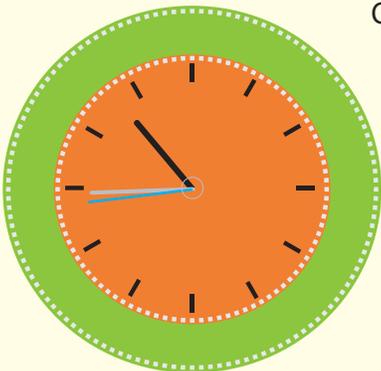
- Fever or feeling feverish/chills (not everyone with flu will have a fever)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, although this is more common in children than adults.

Most people who get the flu will recover in a few days to less than two weeks.

Individuals with chronic health issues like asthma or congestive heart failure might experience worsening of these conditions while sick with the flu.

When to Call Your Doctor:

Most people with the flu have a mild form and do not need medical care or medications. If you have flu symptoms you should stay home. Stay away from other people except to get medical care. Only use the emergency room if you are very sick or are showing emergency warning signs of flu sickness.



Certain people are at high risk for serious flu-related complications.

This includes young children, people 65 and older, pregnant women and people with certain medical conditions. If you are in a high risk group and develop flu symptoms, it's best for you to contact your doctor. If you have symptoms of flu and are in a high risk group or are very sick or worried about your illness, contact your doctor.

Treatment for the Flu:

Your doctor will decide whether to test you for the flu. The doctor may diagnose based on your symptoms alone or use a test. Your doctor may prescribe antiviral drugs to treat the flu. These drugs can make you better faster and may also prevent serious complications.

You should stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to receive medical care. Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol®. You should stay home from work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings.

How can I Help Prevent the Spread of the Flu?

Vaccinate! Vaccination is the most important thing you can do to prevent illness for both yourself and others.

You can also practice good habits to help prevent the spread of the flu:

Limit Contact! Try to avoid close contact with sick people. If you are sick, limit contact with others as much as possible so that you don't infect someone else.

Stay Home! Stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone, except to get medical care or for other necessities. Your fever should be gone without using fever-reducing medicine.

Don't Touch! Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.

Pay Attention to Public Health Officials! If an outbreak of flu or another illness occurs, follow public health advice. This may include information about how to increase distance between people and other measures.

Use Those Tissues! Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If you don't have a tissue, don't sneeze into your hands! Sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow.

Wash! Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

Clean it Up! Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like the flu.

For more information, please go to: www.cdc.gov/flu



Brought to you by
County Health Officials of New York
www.nysacho.org

The Campaign to ImmuNYze all New Yorkers is an initiative of the County Health Officials of New York (NYSACHO) to bring together patients, parents, providers and campaign partners to heighten awareness of the need to immunize throughout life—from infancy to senior years.

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