

If you stay away from people who have influenza, your risk of catching the flu will decrease, you should also:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based gels
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. (cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve and encourage others to do the same)
- Disinfect commonly touched surfaces

Talk with your doctor if signs of a complication develop or if you have any health concerns.

Items to keep on hand:

- Thermometer
- Masks
- Fluids
- Over the counter medications for treatment of symptoms
- Contact your family physician's contact information

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Protect . . .

your self

your family

your community

If you get the flu:

- Stay home. You'll be infectious one day before and up to seven days after symptoms develop.
- Practice social distancing, proper respiratory etiquette, and good hand hygiene.

Resources:

www.cdhd.idaho.gov

www.pandemicflu.gov

www.handhygiene.org/

www.ready.gov



Seasonal Influenza



cdhd.idaho.gov

What is influenza and how can you catch it?

Influenza (flu) is a viral infection of the nose, throat, and lungs.

Influenza viruses are easily spread from person to person in tiny droplets. These droplets are spread when a person with influenza speaks, coughs, and/or sneezes and sends the flu virus into the air. The virus can enter your nose, throat, and lungs and begin to multiply. You can also become infected by touching a contaminated surface, then touching your nose or mouth.

In most healthy people, influenza will go away in 7 to 10 days. It comes on suddenly and causes symptoms such as:

- fever
- cough
- body aches
- headache
- fatigue

These symptoms usually last for 3 to 4 days, after which you may have a dry cough, runny nose, and sore or scratchy throat for another week or so.

Most people recover without problems, but sometimes the illness leads to a bacterial infection, such as: ear infections, sinus infections, or bronchitis. Pneumonia may develop in some people. Young children, adults age 65 and older, and those with serious medical problems



are at an increased risk for complications that may require hospitalization.

What causes the flu?

The more serious flu symptoms are caused by Influenza Viruses A and B. It usually takes 1-4 days from the time you are exposed to the flu virus until you start developing symptoms. You can start spreading the virus one day before symptoms develop and continue to be contagious and spread the virus to others for about a week.

How is the flu treated?

Home treatment is usually all that is needed for flu symptoms. However, antiviral medications are available to reduce the duration and severity of symptoms. Anti-viral medication can be especially useful for older adults and others who are at risk for developing complications from the flu. These medications need to be started within 2 days of your first symptoms.

Not all antiviral medicines work against all strains of the flu. Call your doctor for more information about using antiviral medicine to treat influenza.



Can the flu be prevented?

Your body will be immune to the influenza viruses after infection. Unfortunately the virus changes constantly and produces what are called subtypes or strains that are different from the original influenza virus. So, it is possible to become infected with a different flu virus.

Getting an annual influenza vaccine, known as the “flu shot,” anytime between October and January can help prevent the flu. After 6 months of age, the flu shot is given by injection to anyone who wishes to help prevent the flu.

The flu shot is recommended for those in a high-risk category:

- All children age 6 months to 59 months
- All adults age 50 and older
- Adults and children who have health conditions such as asthma, chronic heart or lung disorders, or an impaired immune system
- Women who will be pregnant during the flu season
- Close contacts of those in a risk category



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