



Flu

8 ways to stay well this flu season

No one likes to be sick with a cold or flu. This flu season, focus on simple things you can do to stay well.

1. **Get a flu shot.** It's the best way to protect yourself.
2. **Wash your hands.** Use soap and hot water for 20 seconds.
3. **Avoid sick people.** If a coworker is sneezing and coughing, steer clear.
4. **Disinfect household surfaces.** Viruses can live on handles and countertops for up to 24 hours.
5. **Sleep well and stay calm.** Quality sleep strengthens your immune system, while stress may weaken it.
6. **Wash clothes and dishes in hot water.** This can cut the spread of germs by about a third.
7. **Be active.** Daily exercise lowers your risk of illness. If you do get sick, you won't feel as bad and you'll be sick fewer days.
8. **Eat well.** Nutrient-rich fruits, veggies and whole grains can protect you from sickness and speed up healing.

Source: Wellsource/Momentum Health Shelf

Trivia time:

Can you get the flu more than once a season?

Answer: Yes! Several strains of virus are active each flu season, so if you get it once you could still contract it again in a slightly different form. For more flu trivia, look for the #FluFactFriday hashtag on social media.

Quiz: Separate flu facts from fiction

The timing of flu season can be unpredictable. How much do you know about the flu? Take this quiz to find out.

1. T F Each year in the U.S., fewer than 10,000 people die from the flu.
2. T F You can spread the flu a whole day before you have symptoms and up to a week after you get sick.
3. T F If you're healthy, eat a balanced diet and exercise each day, you likely won't get the flu.
4. T F After you get the flu shot, it takes about two weeks before you are protected from the flu.
5. T F The most common way to spread the flu is by coughing and sneezing. Its germs stay on desks, doorknobs and other surfaces. You can get the flu if you touch them and then touch your mouth, eyes or nose.

Answers: 1. False. The CDC estimates there are between 12,000 to 56,000 flu-related deaths in the U.S. each year. 2. True 3. False 4. True 5. True

Source: Wellsource/Momentum Health Shelf

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The 3 best ways to fight flu

You have the power to protect yourself and your family this flu season! Here are three of the most effective ways to block the virus:

- 1. Get a flu shot.** Everyone 6 months of age and older should get one. As long as flu activity is ongoing, it's not too late to get vaccinated, even in January or later.
- 2. Take everyday steps to stop the spread of germs.** Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and wash your hands often with soap and water. If you get sick, limit your contact with people to keep from infecting them.
- 3. Take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor prescribes them.** If you get sick, these medications can be used to treat the flu. Antiviral drugs may make your illness less severe and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious complications.

Source: CDC

Trivia time:

Can infants get flu shots?

Answer: Babies younger than 6 months are too little to get vaccinated. The best way to protect them is for people around them to get a flu shot.

Flu shot benefits by the numbers

Flu seasons vary in severity, but millions of Americans get sick each year. For the best chance to fight back, get vaccinated every year. Here's a statistical look at the power of flu shots:

Flu-related doctor visits prevented: 2.5 million, slightly more than the metro-area population of Portland, Oregon.

Flu illnesses prevented: 5 million, as many people use Denver International Airport in a month.

Flu-related hospitalizations prevented: 71,000, enough to fill every hospital bed in Texas.

Source: CDC estimates for 2015-16 flu season

Who is most vulnerable to the flu?

Most people who get the flu will recover in less than two weeks. But some people who are at risk for complications from flu don't know it. They include:

- > People with asthma
- > People with diabetes
- > People with heart disease or history of stroke
- > Adults 65 and older
- > Pregnant women
- > People with HIV/AIDS
- > People who have cancer
- > Children younger than 5

Concerned about getting sick? Talk to your doctor and get a flu shot this season.

Source: CDC

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