

Health Matters

Healthstat Wellness
Newsletter



Cold & Flu Prevention

The fall and winter months are the most common time to catch a cold or the flu. Colds and the flu are respiratory illnesses that are spread by droplets produced by infected individuals. These droplets that contain the virus can spread through the air from coughs and sneezes. The virus can also live on objects such as doorknobs that a person with the virus touched. There are things you can do to prevent getting a cold and the flu, and help stop the spread of germs.

- Avoid close contact with those that are sick.
- Stay at home when you are sick.
- Cover your mouth when coughing and sneezing either in a tissue or your upper sleeve or elbow-not your hands!
- Keep hands clean by washing them often with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces at home, work and school.
- Practice other healthy habits such as eating a healthy diet, being physically active, managing stress and getting enough sleep.

It takes effort from the people and the communities they live and work in to help stop the spread of illnesses like the seasonal flu. Your community may hold special flu vaccination events that provide an easy and convenient way to get members of the community vaccinated.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Flu Vaccine

Getting the flu vaccine is the best thing you can do to protect yourself from getting the flu. The CDC recommends everyone six months and older to get the seasonal flu vaccine. In some cases the vaccine is not recommended for individuals with certain health conditions or allergies. Talk with your healthcare provider if you have any questions about the flu vaccine. According to researchers, the best time to get the vaccine is by the end of October, however, it can still be beneficial to get the vaccine later in the season even into January, or as long as the virus is still circulating. Flu vaccines are available in doctor's offices, clinics, health departments, pharmacies and college health centers and in some schools.

The flu vaccine prevents millions of illnesses, tens of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands of deaths every year.

-Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Symptom Checker

Feeling under the weather but don't know if it's a cold or the flu? Check your symptoms to see if they align more with the flu or a cold, and if you should pay a visit to your healthcare provider based on your symptoms and risks.

Flu:

- Fever/chills
- Aches
- Fatigue, weakness
- Chest discomfort and cough
- Headache

Cold:

- Sneezing
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Sore throat

The onset of flu symptoms are abrupt and more severe, while the symptoms of a cold are more gradual and mild. Most people that get the flu will recover on their own in a few days to less than two weeks. For individuals that are considered an at-risk population who might have a more difficult time fighting off the virus, the flu can lead to complications. If you exhibit symptoms of the flu and are an at-risk population, see your healthcare provider as soon as possible.

At-risk populations include:

- Individuals younger than 12 months
- Individuals older than 65
- Pregnant women
- Individuals with chronic medical conditions
- Individuals with a weakened immune system

Regardless of risk, if you exhibit any of the following symptoms, see your healthcare provider as soon as possible.

- Fever greater than 101.3 F
- Fever lasting five days or returning after not having a fever
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Severe sore throat
- Headache
- Sinus pain

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Mayo Clinic

Want to Learn More?

Make an appointment with your Healthstat clinician if you have any questions about the flu vaccine or what you can do to prevent the cold and flu.

