

Fact Sheet

Flu Facts

What is the flu?

The flu or influenza is an illness caused by a virus. It affects body organs that help you breathe, such as the lungs.

If you get the flu, you're more likely to get other lung infections.

What are flu symptoms?

Fever, headache, muscle pain, runny nose, sore throat, extreme tiredness, and coughing are all flu symptoms. Children may also vomit and have diarrhea.

Symptoms appear one to four days after you get infected.

Fever lasts seven to 10 days. Cough and weakness last one to two weeks longer.

How do people get the flu?

The flu is very contagious. It spreads easily from an infected person to other people.

People can get the flu if they are around an infected person when they cough or sneeze; if they touch an infected person (e.g. shake hands); or if they touch things an infected person touched or coughed or sneezed on, and then touch their eyes, mouth, or nose.

Infected people can spread the flu before they feel sick. Infected adults can infect others from one day before they feel symptoms to five days after. Infected children can infect others for a longer time.

How to prevent the flu?

Get a flu vaccination.

Wash your hands well; wash your hands often.

Throw used tissues in the garbage right away.

Cover coughs and sneezes with a sleeve, not a hand.

Stay home when you get sick.

How to treat at home?

Rest lots.

Drink lots of water.

Do not smoke; stay away from secondhand smoke.

Take acetaminophen at home (Tylenol®).

Do not give any over-the-counter medicine to children less than six years old.

When to see a health care provider?

Call a health care provider if symptoms get worse: more trouble breathing, chest pain, or not much urine; or if you are dehydrated or dizzy.

See a health care provider before you get infected; get a flu vaccine.

Keep the flu from spreading – get a flu vaccination.

A flu vaccination protects you and the people around you.

I got my flu vaccination to protect you! Did you get yours?

For more information about the flu and you: www.flunu.ca