

# Flu Prevention 101



## What is the Flu?

Influenza is caused by viruses that infect the respiratory tract. The flu attacks the body and infects the nose, throat, and lungs. It can range from mild to severe and possible death. The symptoms are similar to a common cold but will come on more abruptly and can last weeks. People who have the flu will have a fever, chills, cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, and fatigue. More severe cases will have vomiting and diarrhea.

The influenza vaccines are safe and well tolerated. Some symptoms you might feel after getting the shot include mild soreness, or swelling at the injection site. This will only last a few days. The risks associated with influenza are much greater than the potential risks associated with getting the shot.

The flu spreads mainly by droplets or by touching your mouth and eyes after touching a surface. The best way to prevent the influenza is to get a flu vaccine each season. It is recommended to get the flu shot by the end of October. This vaccination is offered all the way till January and can still be beneficial if done later in the year.

## Did You Know?

- More than 200,000 individuals are hospitalized every year by the influenza in the US.
- The flu can make chronic conditions worse.
- The vaccines are safe and the best way to protect yourself from getting the flu.
- The vaccine is updated every year to match circulating strains.
- The common cold or stomach flu are not influenza. The flu is only caused by the influenza virus.

## Good Health Habits to Follow

Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick. To stop the spread of the virus, keep your distance from others by staying home to protect them from getting the flu too.

Make sure to cover your mouth and nose. Carry tissues with you as the flu can spread mainly by droplets when someone coughs, sneezes, or talks.

Always wash your hands! This is the best way to protect yourself from germs. It's quick and simple and can prevent you from getting sick and spreading germs to others.

Do not touch your eyes, mouth, or nose as you can get the influenza by touching a surface or object that is contaminated and then touching your face.

## Soap Away the Germs

1. Wet your hands with either cold or hot water and apply soap.
2. Rub your hands together and make sure to get between your fingers and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. You can sing "Happy Birthday" two times through to make sure you are washing long enough.
4. Rinse your hands under running water.
5. Dry your hands with a clean towel.



### Caregiver Corner

Seniors are more likely to get the flu as their immune system is not as strong and they produce fewer antibodies. It's important for caregivers to get immunized not only to protect themselves, but also for the person they are caring for. Hand washing throughout the day is also important as you want to make sure you are not passing along germs.

## Immunity Boosting Foods

- **Beef** is a good source of zinc and will boost your immune system. Getting enough zinc in your diet will increase your immune function and response.
- **Sweet Potatoes** contain vitamin A which helps maintain the health of your mucosal surfaces which includes your gastrointestinal tract and skin.
- **Turmeric** is high in antioxidants and can relieve your body of toxins.
- **Garlic** promotes a healthy gut flora, which will rid any toxins, bacteria and viruses.
- **Dark Leafy Greens** are a great source of vitamin C which can help fight colds.
- **Chicken Soup** contains proteins and vegetables and also keeps you hydrated.

*Promoting Good Health and Quality of  
Life*



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