

Flu and Cold Season Tips

Be sure to protect yourself and your loved ones during cold and flu season by following these tips:

Get a flu shot. This is the single best way to protect against the flu. Everyone 6 months of age and older is encouraged to get vaccinated every year. Flu season in Ohio normally peaks in January or later. Flu shots are widely available throughout the community.

Wash your hands frequently. Since your hands are the most common way to get germs into your body, you should scrub vigorously with soap and water for 10-15 seconds to keep them as germ-free as possible. Wash after using the bathroom, before handling food, before eating, and any other time you think you might have picked up germs.

Avoid touching your nose, eyes and mouth. You can't keep all the germs off your hands all the time. So, keep your hands away from germs' most common entryways into the body.

Cover your nose and mouth with your sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing. Stop the spread your germs to others by coughing or sneezing into your sleeve instead of your hand or into the air.

Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, drink plenty of fluids, eat nutritious foods, manage your stress, and be physically active.

Sick with the Flu?

How do I know if I have the flu?

You may have the flu if you have some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever*
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

*It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

What should I do if I get sick?

Most people with the flu have mild illness and may not need medical care or antiviral drugs. If you get sick with flu symptoms, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care, if needed.

Your doctor may prescribe antiviral drugs that can treat the flu. These drugs work better for treatment the sooner they are started.

How long should I stay home if I'm sick?

You should stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or other necessities. Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol®.

What should I do while I'm sick?

Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from infecting them. You should stay home from work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings. Always cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Wash your hands often to keep from spreading flu to others.