



Flu Symptoms & Severity

Anyone can get the flu (even healthy people), and serious problems from influenza can happen at any age, but most people who get the flu will have mild illness, will not need medical care or antiviral drugs, and will recover in less than two weeks. Some people are at a higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications if they get sick that result in being hospitalized and occasionally result in death. Pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections and ear infections are examples of flu-related complications. This includes people 65 years and older pregnant women, and young children. The flu also can make chronic health problems worse, for example, asthma, diabetes or heart disease.

Influenza Symptoms

Influenza (also known as the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The flu is different from a cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly. People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

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

Flu Severity

Flu is unpredictable and how severe it is can vary widely from one season to the next depending on many things, including:

- what flu viruses are spreading,
- how much flu vaccine is available
- when vaccine is available
- how many people get vaccinated, and
- how well the flu vaccine is matched to flu viruses that are causing illness.