

## Allergy-Proof Your House

Taking time to reduce the allergens in your home can dramatically improve the symptoms of hay fever or allergic asthma that you may be experiencing. Here are some steps to help you get started down the road to relief:



### BEDROOM

- Replace wool or feathered bedding with bedding made of synthetic materials.
- Remove carpeting and use hardwood or linoleum flooring and washable area rugs. Alternatively, you can use low-pile carpeting and vacuum weekly with a vacuum cleaner that has a small-particle or HEPA filter. If you choose to use low-pile carpeting, steam-clean it frequently (carpet shampoos do not usually get hot enough to get rid of allergens).
- If you must have curtains, use washable curtains made of either cotton or synthetic fabrics and frequently wash them if you open the windows.



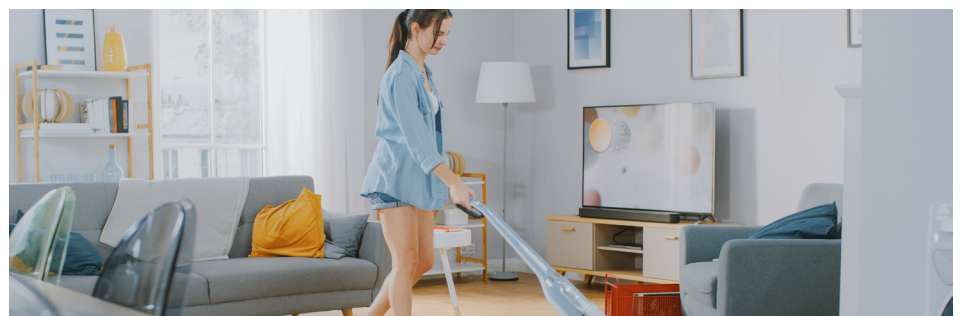
### KITCHEN

- Install and use a vented exhaust fan to remove cooking fumes and reduce moisture.
- Wash dishes daily and scrub the sink and faucets to remove mold and food debris.
- Wipe up excess moisture in the refrigerator so that mold doesn't grow. Regularly clean out the fridge and discard moldy or out-of-date food. Clean drip pans and clean or replace any moldy door seals.



### BATHROOM

- Install an exhaust fan if you don't already have one. Use it every time that you bathe or shower.
- Towel-dry the tub after use. Scrub any mold from the tub, shower, and faucets with a cleaner at least monthly. Clean moldy shower curtains or replace them with washable versions. Clean or replace moldy bathmats.
- Don't leave magazines or books in the bathroom – paper absorbs moisture, and mold can grow between the pages.

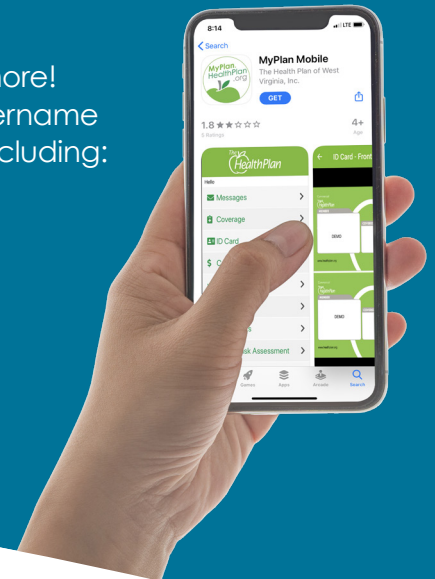


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## Get the Facts About the Flu and the Flu Vaccine

### What is the flu?

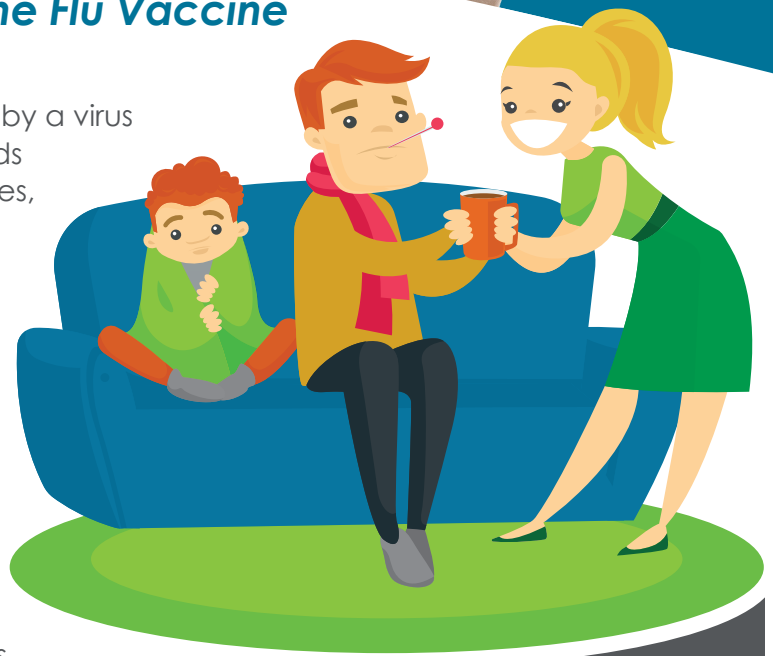
The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus that infects the nose, throat, and lungs. It spreads through droplets when someone coughs, sneezes, or talks. You can get the flu by touching an object with the virus on it and then touching your face. Most people contract the flu when droplets land directly in their mouth or nose. Symptoms of the flu usually come on quickly, unlike the common cold, which develops gradually. Common symptoms of the flu last for up to two weeks. It can be mild or very serious and can even be fatal. The flu season usually peaks between January and March.

### Symptoms

- Fever and chills (please note that not everyone will develop a fever; you can have the flu without a fever)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Some people, especially children, experience vomiting and diarrhea
- Some people will be weak and tired for several weeks

### Treatment

- Antiviral drugs
- Home remedies can help relieve symptoms
  - Drink more fluids
  - Warm showers, warm compresses
  - Nasal strips
  - Humidifiers
- Over-the-counter decongestants, cough suppressants, and fever-reducing medications can also offer relief
- Antibiotics treat bacterial infections and are not effective against the flu, which is a virus



### Why should you get the flu shot?

Getting the flu vaccine is the single most important thing that you can do to prevent getting ill from the flu.

- Helps keep you from getting the flu
- Makes the flu less severe
- Prevents complications and death from the flu

Contrary to rumors, you cannot get the flu from the vaccine. The vaccine causes no side effects in most people.

## What is an Emergency?

It means your life could be threatened or you could be hurt permanently (disabled) if you do not get care quickly.

If you are pregnant, it could mean harm to the health of your unborn child.

### When should you go to the Emergency Room?

You should go to the ER when there is a danger to your life. Dangers to your life include:

- Difficulty breathing
- Severe chest pain
- Severe bleeding
- Blacking out (fainting)
- Poisoning
- Severe burns
- Convulsions
- Broken bone
- Vaginal bleeding in pregnancy

### What is not an emergency?

As individual symptoms these are usually not emergencies?

- Coughing
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Earache
- Sore throat
- Toothache
- Colds
- Pink eye
- Stomachache
- Mild fever
- Rashes
- Bruises

### What should you do if it is not an emergency?

Call your doctor. Follow your doctor's advice. They will tell you where to be seen. It may be his office, an urgent care facility, or the ER.



## Adding More Fruits and Vegetables to Your Meals and Snacks

The average American does not eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. Only 1% of adults and 2% of kids meet the fruit and veggie recommendations each day! Eating fruits and vegetables is associated with reduced risk of:

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Some cancers
- Overweight/obesity

Fruits and veggies are full of vitamins and minerals. They help you feel healthy and energized. There are a lot of ways to work fruits and vegetables into your existing meal and snack schedule. Some tips for including more in your meals and snacks include:

- Mix fruit or frozen berries into your yogurt or cereal.
- Add fresh or frozen veggies to a can of soup.
- Add veggies to your scrambled eggs and omelets.
- Mix sliced fruit or frozen berries into your yogurt or cereal.
- Add onions, peppers, and mushrooms to a jar of spaghetti sauce.
- Add apple, grapes, or pineapple to tuna or chicken salad.
- Make yogurt parfaits with berries, nuts, or granola.
- Add veggies to your meatloaf. Grated carrots and zucchini, or sliced mushrooms work well!
- Stack your sandwich high with veggies. Tomato, lettuce, onions, bell peppers, or avocado are good choices.
- Add pumpkin or squash puree to your pancake or waffle mix.
- Mix some spinach, tomatoes, peas, or broccoli into your macaroni and cheese.
- Make veggie quesadillas with peppers, onions, greens, or zucchini. You can add plenty of salsa!
- Add carrots, corn, onion, sweet potato, or butternut squash to your favorite chili.
- Stuffed peppers or stuffed cabbage have a healthy serving of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.
- Mash cooked cauliflower and like you would eat mashed potatoes.
- Try spaghetti squash or zucchini noodles instead of regular pasta.
- Bake apples or pears and top with cinnamon and a touch of honey for a dessert.

## Tips for Staying Safe and Getting Enough Exercise

### Standing More

- Even if you exercise regularly, sitting for at least six hours a day leads to a higher risk of premature death than people who sat for less than three hours. When we are sitting, our muscles are not contracting, so it takes longer to clear fat and sugar from the blood.
- We should all get up and move every 30 minutes or so.

### Starting Slowly

- If you're not used to exercising regularly, start slowly. Even a 10-15-minute walk once or twice a day can be beneficial.
- 30 minutes of brisk walking five days a week is enough to lower the risk of many chronic diseases including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer.
- The amount of time required to adapt to a new level of activity depends on age. Kids and young adults can likely safely increase activity by small amounts every week or two. Older adults need more time to adapt to a new level of activity, in the range of two to four weeks.
- When inactive people slowly increase their activity level, there is no known risk for sudden cardiac events and there is very low risk of bone, joint, or muscle injuries
- If you are unsure if you are healthy enough for exercise, talk to your doctor about which activities are safe.
- Always reach for new goals when exercising and try not to do the same routine every day. This will help make sure that every muscle group gets attention and improves your health. It will also prevent boredom.



### Knowing Your Limits

- If you feel dizzy or nauseous while exercising, take a break. If you have diabetes, this could mean that your blood sugar is dropping. Plan ahead of time and bring a carbohydrate source to treat low blood sugar, such as a couple of hard candy or a sports drink.
- Stop doing an activity if you feel any pain, shortness of breath, or light-headed.
- To ensure you're not working too hard, take the "talk test." If you try to talk and become short of breath and cannot speak, then that's a sign of slowing down.

### Losing Weight and Maintaining Strength

- Exercise makes belly fat disappear. Some people notice their pants fit differently when they start exercising, even if they haven't lost weight. That's because they've lost belly fat. This is very important because it's the most dangerous kind of fat. Belly fat leads to both diabetes and heart disease.
- Exercise alone does not seem to be the key to losing weight. You must both exercise and change your eating habits to see a change on the scale.
- Without strength training, you start to lose muscle at age 40 if you're a woman and 50 if you're a man. You'll lose about one to two percent of your muscle every year if you don't do something to prevent it! You also lose bone as you age and strength training can help to stem the loss of bone and rebuild lost muscle. Cardio alone is not enough!



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