

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. It can be mild or very serious and can even be fatal. The flu season usually peaks between January and March.



What are the symptoms of the flu?

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 and include:

- 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.

How is the flu treated?

- Antiviral drugs can be used.
- Home remedies can help relieve symptoms. They include:
 - Drinking 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

You cannot get the flu from the vaccine. The vaccine causes no side effects in most people.