

## Flu Information

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According to the CDC, vaccination in November will provide adequate protection from the seasonal flu, which typically peaks in February here in New England.

### How to Avoid Transmitting or Getting the Flu or Other Respiratory Illnesses:

- ◆ Good hand hygiene: People should wash hands or use alcohol hand rubs or gels after being in public or after contact with anyone with a cold or flu.
- ◆ Cough etiquette: When coughing, one should turn the head and cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue and promptly dispose of the used tissue; or cough into the inside of the elbow if a tissue is not available.
- ◆ Avoid taking young children or immunocompromised people into large crowds (shopping malls, for example) unnecessarily when flu is in the community.
- ◆ Avoid close contact (holding, kissing) between infants and anyone who has a cold or the flu.
- ◆ Do not share things that go into the mouth such as drinking cups, straws, etc.
- ◆ If people are experiencing respiratory symptoms with a fever, they should refrain from public activities (stay home from work or school) for at least five days (maximum infectiousness lasts 3-5 days in adults and up to 7 days in children) to prevent spread of the infection.
- ◆ Clean things that are touched often in household, classroom and childcare settings: door or refrigerator handles, phones, water faucets, etc.

Colds and flu are both highly contagious and, in the initial stages, a bad cold and a mild case of the flu might seem alike. However, flu is a serious illness that can have life-threatening complications, unlike colds.

Is it a Cold or the Flu ? Check this table for a comparison of the symptoms for each illness:

<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>Cold</b>	<b>Flu</b>
Fever	rare in adults and older children, but can be as high as 102 degrees (F) in infants and small children	usually 102 degrees (F) but can go up to 104 and usually lasts 3 to 4 days
Headache	rare	sudden onset and can be severe
Muscle aches	mild	usual, and often severe
Tiredness and Weakness	mild	often extreme, and can last two or more weeks
Extreme exhaustion	never	sudden onset and can be severe
Runny nose	often	sometimes
Sneezing	often	sometimes
Sore throat	often	sometimes
Cough	mild hacking cough	usual, and can become severe

### **What You Should Do if You Get the Flu:**

- ◆ Rest
- ◆ Drink plenty of liquids
- ◆ Avoid alcohol and tobacco
- ◆ Take medication to relieve the symptoms
- ◆ If someone has severe or prolonged flu-like illness, they should seek medical attention!

Realize that influenza is caused by a virus, so antibiotics do not work to cure it.

**\* DO NOT GIVE ASPIRIN TO A CHILD OR TEENAGER WHO HAS THE FLU \***

Never give aspirin to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms - and particularly fever - without first speaking to your doctor. Giving aspirin to children and teenagers who have influenza can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye Syndrome. Children with symptoms should rest, drink plenty of fluids and take non-aspirin pain relievers such as acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol) or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil, Motrin) to relieve the flu symptoms.

### **When Should You or Your Child See a Health Care Provider?**

You should see a health care provider or go to an emergency room immediately if your child has any of the symptoms below:

- ◆ High or prolonged fever
- ◆ Rapid or labored breathing
- ◆ Bluish skin
- ◆ Changes in mental status such as not waking up, or not interacting; being so irritable the child does not want to be held or seizures
- ◆ Becoming sick again with fever and/or a worse cough after flu symptoms have improved
- ◆ Not drinking enough fluids

### **Adults should seek immediate medical attention if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:**

- ◆ High or prolonged fever
- ◆ Difficulty breathing; shortness of breath
- ◆ Pain or pressure in the chest
- ◆ Near-fainting or fainting
- ◆ Confusion
- ◆ Severe or persistent vomiting

For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) Flu Information Web site at:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

Information provided on this page excerpted from fact sheets provided by CDC and MDPH.