

# The Flu

## Seasonal and Pandemic Flu



 Learning for Life



Public Health

# Flu germs spread easily.

They can be in the mouth and nose of an infected person—even before symptoms start.

## Coughs and sneezes can spray flu germs into the air.

Nearby people can then breathe in the germs and catch the flu.

## But that's not all:

- Germs sprayed into the air can also fall onto nearby objects or surfaces.
- Coughing or sneezing into the hands, or wiping the nose, can put flu germs on the hands. Flu germs can then get onto anything those hands touch.

When you touch things with flu germs on them and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes, you can catch the flu.

**But there's a lot you can do to protect yourself!**



What's next?



Preventing the flu

## Coughing and sneezing?

Help control the flu germs that can spray into nearby air.

### Always cover coughs and sneezes.

- Use a tissue. Then throw the tissue away, and wash your hands well.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve—not your hands.



### Keep your distance.

Stay at least 6 feet away from others if you are coughing or sneezing—or if they are.

### Also, don't share things that could spread germs.

Examples include cups, eating utensils and towels. Be sure to wash items well before reuse.



### QUICK TIP

During a flu outbreak in your area, avoid crowds. The more people that are around, the more likely it is that flu germs are around, too.

What's next?



Hand washing

## Don't just wash—wash WELL.

1. Wet hands with clean, running water.  
If possible, use warm water.
2. Lather both hands with soap.
3. Scrub all surfaces of hands for 20 seconds.
4. Rinse hands well with running water.
5. Dry your hands with a paper towel or an air dryer.
6. If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet.

**Remember—try not to touch your eyes, nose and mouth!**



### QUICK TIP

Help grandkids learn to scrub for at least 20 seconds. Teach them to sing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” twice or to recite the alphabet while washing.

What's next?



Other healthy habits



## Get enough exercise.

Regular physical activity is important for everyone—at any age. It can help reduce some of the negative effects of aging, too.

### MY PLAN FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Talk to your health-care provider before starting an exercise program. Ask about the amount and intensity of activity that's right for you. Also ask about stretching, flexibility, balance and/or muscle-strengthening exercises. Write your plans for activity here:

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What's next?



Flu symptoms

## Know what to do

if you have flu symptoms.

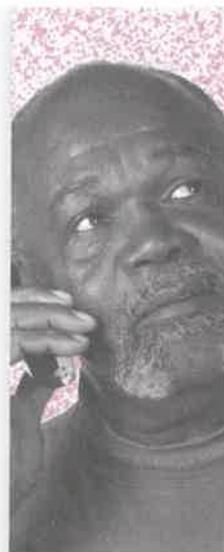
**Call your health-care provider or clinic right away. Tell them:**

- your symptoms
- if you have any chronic illnesses
- about any medications you're taking.

They'll tell you if you should come in for testing or treatment. (Many illnesses can cause flu-like symptoms.)

**You may be given special flu medications called antiviral drugs.**

- They can sometimes help shorten the length of illness, if taken soon after symptoms start.
- In some cases, they may be prescribed to help prevent the flu during an outbreak. Talk to your health-care provider now about whether this may be right for you.



What's next?



Home treatment



# Avoid spreading the flu to other family members.

## Kim's story

One year I had the flu, and my daughter's family came to visit me. They all ended up catching the flu, too! Now when anyone in the family has the flu, we stick to phone calls instead of visits.



## Some basics:

### Limit contact

between those who are sick and those who aren't. If possible, have the person with the flu stay in a separate room.

### Clean any surfaces and reusable items that:

- have been used by the person who is sick
- are near the person who is sick.

**Make sure everyone practices good hygiene habits. (See pages 5-7.)**

What's next?



Flu pandemics

## A severe pandemic can have serious effects, such as:

- severe illness in large numbers of people
- closure of schools and businesses
- travel disruptions
- shortages of goods, including food, medicine and fuel
- overwhelmed medical and government services, and interruptions of all other services, including home health care.

**Flu pandemics can occur** at any time. That's why it's so important to be ready.

**“The cautious seldom err.”**  
~ Confucius



What's next?



Preparing for an outbreak



## Tips to take away

Post this where you'll see it often—  
for example, on your refrigerator.

### Flu-fighting tips

- Get the seasonal flu vaccine each year.
- Wash your hands often and well.
- Stay strong—eat right and get enough physical activity.
- Don't share items that could spread flu germs.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others if you are coughing or sneezing—or if they are.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your upper sleeve.
- Ask your health-care provider if you'll need to take special steps for the flu (for example, if you have a chronic illness or take medications).
- Be ready for flu outbreaks.

Tear here.

### Flu resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)
  - 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
  - 1-888-232-6348 (TTY)
- your local and state health departments
- official U.S. Web site on flu-pandemic preparation—[www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)