



# INFLUENZA (FLU)

## HOW TO HELP CONTROL THE SPREAD OF THE FLU

**Hand hygiene is the most effective way to prevent the spread of infections! Wash your hands before and after caring for a sick person.**

- Know the symptoms of the flu. Be aware of these symptoms in people in your home, work place and community.
- Don't enter the home of a sick person, especially if he or she has a fever, if you are not needed for the person's care or support.
- Avoid getting too close to a sick person if you must be in or enter the home of a sick person. Keep at least three feet away from the sick person.
- Separate the sick person from other people in the home.
- Have the sick person stay home and avoid leaving unless seeking medical care. A sick person is most likely to spread the flu when running a fever or during the first five days of getting sick.
- Know when to seek medical care for a sick person.
- Have only one person provide care for a sick person.
- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth while you are caring for a sick person.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs often spread this way.

- Keep your hands clean by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand rub. Sick people should clean their hands too!
- Cover your coughs and sneezes by using clean tissues. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve if you don't have a tissue or handkerchief. Sick people should cover their coughs and sneezes too!
- Immediately dispose of used tissues into a trash can. Always wash your hands after using a tissue.
- Use household cleaners to keep surfaces clean. Clean shared surfaces such as faucets, light switches and door and cabinet handles often.
- Wash all dishes, utensils and drinking glasses well. There's no need to separate a sick person's dishes, utensils or drinking glasses. There's also no need to do any special washing or sterilizing.
- Change bedding and towels. Clean your hands after touching soiled laundry. There's no need to clean a sick person's laundry separately.
- Get the flu vaccine (a shot or nasal spray as recommended by your health care provider).



**SYMPTOMS OF THE FLU:**

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Tiredness (can be extreme)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea (more often in children than adults)

**WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE THE FLU?**

- Rest
- Drink fluids
- Stay home
- Take fever reducers such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen

**WHEN SHOULD I SEEK MEDICAL CARE?**

**CALL A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER**

*if you or a person you provide care for:*

- Is unable to drink enough fluids (has dark urine; may feel dizzy when standing)
- Has a fever for more than three to five days
- Feels better, then gets a fever again

**GET MEDICAL CARE IMMEDIATELY**

*if you or a person you provide care for:*

- Is short of breath or is wheezing
- Coughs up blood
- Has pain in the chest when breathing
- Has heart disease such as angina or congestive heart failure and has chest pain
- Is unable to walk or sit up or function normally (someone else might notice this, especially in elderly persons)

**WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?**

- Your health care provider
- Your local VA
- Local and national news
- On these websites:
  - [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)
  - [www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/pandemic/index.asp](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/pandemic/index.asp)
  - [www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/prevention/index.asp](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/prevention/index.asp)

**TO CLEAN YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER:**

1. Wet your hands with warm water.
2. Apply soap and rub your hands together for at least 15 seconds.
3. Rub your palms, fingernails, in between your fingers and the backs of your hands.
4. Rinse and dry your hands.
5. Turn the water off with a clean paper towel if you are in a public rest room.

**TO CLEAN YOUR HANDS WITH ALCOHOL FOAM:**

1. Use alcohol foam hand cleaner when your hands do not look dirty.
2. Rub the alcohol foam hand cleaner all over your hands, under your nails and between your fingers. Rub until your hands are dry.

