

What are the symptoms of flu?

People who have flu often have some or all of the following symptoms:

- High temperature (over 38°C/100.4°F) or feeling feverish with chills
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Sore muscles and joints
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Feeling very tired
- Some people may have nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, though this is more common in children than adults

With flu there is often a sudden onset of symptoms with people often remembering the exact hour they got sick. In general recovery is in 2 to 7 days but the cough can linger for longer (up to 2 to 3 weeks).

Antibiotics do not work against the flu virus

I have symptoms of flu; what should I do?

Patients/residents of healthcare facilities

- Tell your doctor and nurse about your symptoms, so that they can send a swab to the laboratory to check if you have the flu virus and decide if you need to start treatment
- Your doctor or nurse may decide that you need to stay in a room on your own whilst you have the flu to help prevent it spreading to other patients who might be prone to getting a severe infection

Visitors

- Do not visit hospitals or nursing homes
- Stay indoors, keep warm and rest
- Drink plenty of liquids
- Simple painkillers such as paracetamol may help to relieve headaches and muscle pains
- Contact your GP for advice when symptoms start if you
 - Are 65 years or older
 - Have a longterm illness
 - Have a child aged under 2 years who has flu symptoms
- Anyone with flu symptoms should contact their GP, if they start to feel worse or if after a few days are not feeling better

To protect your relative/friend:

Do not visit hospitals/nursing homes if you think you have flu

Flu (influenza): Information for patients/residents and visitors of healthcare facilities

What is flu?

Flu (also called influenza) is an infectious respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus. Flu can occur throughout the year but usually peaks in winter.

Flu virus infects the nose, throat and sometimes travels into the lungs. For most people, flu causes moderate illness but in some people, it can cause severe illness and rarely can lead to death.

Who is at risk of flu?

Influenza can affect all ages however it has more serious effects in those aged 65 years and older, very young children, and those with certain medical conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes etc.

What can I do to prevent getting flu?

If you are 65 years or older or have a longterm medical condition, contact your GP about the flu vaccine.

Simple hygiene measures can help prevent flu spreading:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing and sneezing
- Place the tissue in a bin immediately after use
- No tissues? Cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands
- Wash hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub after disposing of the tissue

Do not visit hospitals/nursing homes if you have symptoms of flu

How does flu spread?

Flu usually spreads from person-to-person by droplets when people with flu, cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land on the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might get flu by touching a surface or object with flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or nose.

Most people suffering with flu can spread the flu virus to others by coughing or sneezing. Flu can be contagious from 1-2 days before the symptoms start and a person with flu can continue to spread the virus to others for up to one week after symptoms begin. Children or people with weak immune systems (patients needing intensive care or patients on chemotherapy) may spread the virus for longer than one week after symptoms begin.

