



Flu (Influenza) Checklist

About Influenza

- Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness. Serious outcomes of flu infection can result in hospitalization or death. Some people, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk of serious flu complications.
- Seasonal Flu. In the United States, flu season occurs in the fall and winter. While influenza viruses circulate year-round, most of the time flu activity peaks between December and February, but activity can last as late as May. On average, about 8% of the U.S. population gets sick from flu each season, with a range of between 3% and 11%, depending on the season.
- How does flu spread? Flu viruses are spread by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people nearby or be inhaled into their lungs. You can also get flu by touching a surface that has flu virus on it and then touching your own eyes, mouth or nose.
- Stay informed about public health recommendations related to flu and other health threats by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Website ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)).

Healthy Habits to Help Prevent Flu

1. Get vaccinated.

Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every season, especially people at high risk.

2. Avoid close contact.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, keep your distance from others.

3. Stay home when you are sick.

Stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick to prevent spreading your illness to others.

4. Cover your mouth and nose.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing to prevent those around you from getting sick.

5. Clean your hands.

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

6. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

7. Practice other good health habits.

Clean frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

If You Do Get Sick with Flu

Flu Symptoms can include:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills (not everyone with flu will have a fever)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Sometimes diarrhea and vomiting, though this is more common in children than adults

What should I do if I get sick?

- Stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible except to seek medical care.
- Some people are at high risk of developing serious flu complications (children, pregnant women, older adults, people with pre-existing health conditions).
- It's possible for otherwise healthy people to develop severe illness, so anyone concerned about their illness should consult their medical provider.

How long can a sick person spread flu to others?

- People with flu are most contagious in the first 3 to 4 days after their illness begins.
- Some otherwise healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick.
- Some people, especially young children and people with weakened immune systems, might be able to infect others with flu viruses for an even longer time.

How long should I stay home if I'm sick?

- Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care. Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.
- Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.
- Stay informed about public health recommendations related to flu and other health threats by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Website ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)).

What should I do when someone is sick?

- Choose only one caregiver to take care of sick family members.
- Keep the person with flu in a separate sick room if you can. Limit visitors other than the caregiver.
- If the sick person must leave the room, ask them to wear a facemask or use a tissue to cover coughs and sneezes.
- Keep the air clean. Open a window in the sick room or use a fan to keep fresh air flowing
- Clean the sick room each day.
- Wash laundry with normal laundry soap and dry on a hot setting. Keep dirty laundry away from your face and body. Wash your hands right after touching dirty laundry.
- It's OK to wash the sick person's bedding or clothes with other people's laundry.
- Wash the sick person's dishes with normal dish soap or place in the dishwasher.

For more information on disaster and emergency preparedness, visit [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org).