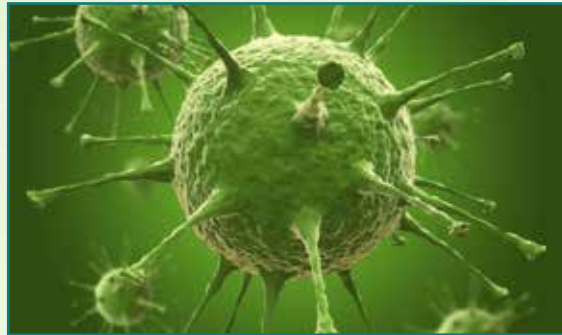


How to Help Control the Spread of Flu



This information is provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for veterans, their families, friends, volunteers, and employees. It describes ways to help control the spread of influenza (flu) within our homes and keep ourselves and those around us as healthy as possible.

Get A Flu Shot: Getting a flu shot each year is the best way to slow the spread of flu. The VA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that everyone age 6 months and older get a flu shot each year.

Stay Home When Sick: Because flu spreads easily from person to person, stay home when you are sick. Studies show you are most contagious and likely to spread flu virus to others for at least 5 days after your first symptoms start AND at least 48 hours after your last fever.

Clean Your Hands: Clean your hands before and after caring for a sick person, and after coughing or sneezing. Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer. Sick people should clean their hands too!

Cover Your Coughs And Sneezes: Use clean tissues and discard after use. Coughing or sneezing into your sleeve is OK when you don't have a tissue. Always clean your hands after coughing or sneezing.

Keep Surfaces Clean: Flu virus can live on surfaces for up to 48 hours. Use household cleaners to clean surfaces that are touched often such as phones, faucets, light switches, countertops, handles on doors and cabinets, keyboard and mouse, and TV remotes.

Wash All Eating Utensils And Drinking Glasses Well: No need to separate a sick person's utensils or drinking glasses or do any special washing or sterilizing.

Change Bedding And Towels: Clean your hands after touching soiled laundry. No need to clean a sick person's laundry separately.

Avoid Touching Your Eyes, Nose, And Mouth: Germs often spread this way.

Wear A Mask: When giving care to a sick person.

Avoid Getting Too Close: Keep at least six feet away from the sick person whenever possible. Separate a sick person from other people in the home. Have only one person provide care for a sick person.

Know The Symptoms Of Flu:
(See next page)

Know When To Seek Medical Care:
(See next page)

Stop the Spread of Flu

- Get a flu shot
- Stay home when sick
- Clean your hands
- Cover your coughs and sneezes

Common Flu Symptoms

- Fever (100°F or higher)
- Body or muscle aches
- Headache
- Feeling tired or weak
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Stomach symptoms (mostly in children)



If You Have Common Flu Symptoms

- Stay home
- Rest
- Drink fluids
- Take medicines for fever such as acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil® or Motrin®)
- Call your healthcare team within 48 hours for advice about what to do next
 - ▶ Antiviral medicines may reduce flu symptoms if started within 48 hours of your first symptoms

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WARNING!

Moderate or Severe flu symptoms are signs of complications from flu!

When to Seek Medical Care

Call your healthcare team within 48 hours:

- If you have common flu symptoms or
- If you have moderate flu symptoms:
 - ▶ Not unable to drink enough fluids (Dark urine or feeling dizzy when standing are signs that you are not drinking enough fluids)
 - ▶ Fever 100° F or higher for 3 or more days
 - ▶ Feel better, and then get a fever or sore throat again

Go right away for medical care:

- If you have severe flu symptoms:
 - ▶ Shortness of breath or wheezing
 - ▶ Coughing up blood
 - ▶ Pain or pressure in your chest when breathing
 - ▶ Chest pain, especially if you have heart disease like angina or congestive heart failure
 - ▶ Trouble with balance, walking or sitting up, or becoming confused

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

www.publichealth.va.gov/flu

www.cdc.gov/flu

www.flu.gov



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