

Influenza (Flu) FAQs: Adults



1. What is flu?

Flu is a sickness that spreads easily from person to person. It is caused by a virus that affects the nose, throat, and lungs. Some people with flu may have mild illness, but others may be very sick and need to be hospitalized. In rare cases, flu can cause death.

2. How does the flu spread?

Flu spreads when sick people cough, sneeze, or talk. Tiny droplets that have the virus go into the air and then can land in mouths or noses of people nearby. The droplets are too small to see. People can spread flu before they feel sick or even if they never feel sick.

Flu can also spread when someone touches a surface with the virus and then touches their mouth, nose, or eyes.

3. What are common flu symptoms?

People with flu may have:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Body or muscle aches
- Lack of energy
- Trouble breathing

4. Who is more likely to get very sick from flu?

Some people are at higher risk of developing severe flu complications if they get sick, including people 65 and older, patients who are pregnant, young children, and people with underlying medical conditions, like lung disease, diabetes, or heart disease and people with weakened immune systems. Getting a flu vaccination every year is especially important for these groups of people.

5. How can I protect myself from the flu?

The best way to reduce the risk of seasonal flu is to get a flu shot every year.

Other ways to help protect yourself and others from the flu include:

- Staying away from sick people
- Covering your coughs and sneezes
- Washing your hands often
- Keeping air clean and fresh indoors



← Scan here to access additional helpful vaccine and immunization resources at www.SpreadTheFacts.org

©2026 American Medical Association. All rights reserved.