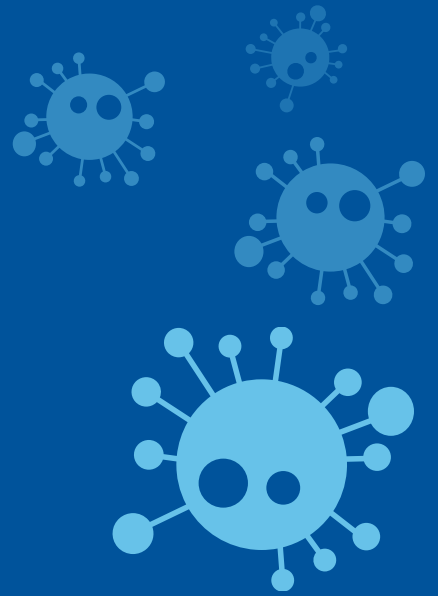


# Understanding Influenza (Flu)



Influenza (flu) is a contagious viral infection that can cause mild to severe symptoms and life-threatening complications, including death, even in healthy children and adults.<sup>1</sup> Influenza viruses spread mainly from one individual to another through coughing or sneezing. Less often, they can also spread through touching a contaminated surface and then touching the mouth, eyes, or nose. Individuals can pass flu on to others even before their own symptoms start and for a week or more after symptoms begin.

## Flu Severity and Symptoms

The severity of each flu season varies depending on a number of factors, including the specific influenza viruses circulating. **The best way to prevent flu and potentially serious complications is through annual flu vaccination** (recommended for everyone age 6 months and older).<sup>1</sup> Even in cases when flu vaccination does not prevent infection completely, flu vaccines can still provide protection by **reducing the severity and duration of illness**.<sup>2</sup>

Flu is not the same as a common cold. Flu usually comes on suddenly and symptoms may include the following<sup>3</sup>:

- Fever
- Aches (muscle, body, and headaches)
- Chills
- Tiredness (fatigue)
- Sudden onset
- Cough, runny or stuffy nose, and/or sore throat
- Vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults)

Is it flu? Think F.A.C.T.S.



Fever



Aches



Chills



Tiredness



Sudden onset

## Impact of Flu

Unlike many other viral respiratory infections including the common cold, flu can cause severe illness and life-threatening complications. While most individuals experience only mild symptoms, influenza viruses can cause serious infection or even death. Flu-related complications that can affect anyone include:

- Pneumonia
- Sinus infections
- Worsening of chronic medical conditions including asthma, diabetes, and heart disease
- Bronchitis
- Ear infections

Children younger than age 5 years—especially those younger than 2 years—adults age 65 years and older, pregnant women, and people with certain chronic health conditions are at higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications.<sup>4</sup>

### References

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National  
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[www.nfid.org/flu](http://www.nfid.org/flu)

# Understanding Influenza (Flu)



On average, flu causes millions of **illnesses**, hundreds of thousands of **hospitalizations**, and tens of thousands of **deaths** in the US each year



Every year, **flu affects employers and businesses** and costs the US an estimated \$11.2 billion in direct and indirect costs<sup>5</sup>



During the 2019–2020 flu season, **vaccination prevented** an estimated 7.5 million flu illnesses; 105,000 hospitalizations, and 6,300 deaths

Learn more at: [www.nfid.org/flu](http://www.nfid.org/flu)

## Flu Prevention and Treatment

Since it is not possible to predict the severity of each flu season or how sick an individual may get due to flu, prevention and treatment are critical. Annual flu vaccination is the best way to prevent flu. For more than 50 years, hundreds of millions of individuals in the US have safely received seasonal flu vaccines.<sup>7</sup>

**Take 3 steps to help #FightFlu:**



**Get vaccinated** against flu **every year** (everyone age 6 months and older)



**Practice healthy habits** like washing your hands, covering your coughs and sneezes, and staying home if you are sick



**Take flu antiviral drugs** if prescribed

**Help #StopTheSpread of both flu and COVID-19.**  
Learn more at [www.nfid.org](http://www.nfid.org)

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- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Estimated Influenza Illnesses, Medical visits, and Hospitalizations Averted by Vaccination in the United States — 2019–2020 Influenza Season. [www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden-averted/2019-2020.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden-averted/2019-2020.htm) Accessed September 2021.
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