

Adult Health Bulletin



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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: PREPARING FOR THE FLU SEASON

Although there is no way to know exactly when the flu will begin this year or how severe it will be, there are steps you can take to help prevent the spread of the illness and perhaps even help you from getting sick yourself.

Influenza, commonly referred to as the flu, is a virus that can cause a mild to severe illness. The flu spreads through air droplets when people sneeze, cough or even talk. It may also be spread through contact with a surface that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth or nose. This type of transfer is less common.

It is recommended that anyone over the age of 6 months get the flu vaccine. The vaccine is considered the most important step in flu prevention. Getting the flu vaccine as soon as it becomes available is a good idea and it will protect you throughout the flu season. You can get the vaccine in many different places. You should check with your healthcare provider to

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see if they offer the vaccine. If you do not have a regular healthcare provider you may also get the vaccine at places like the local health department or a pharmacy.

There are people who should not get the flu vaccine. **It is best to talk to your healthcare provider if you:**

- Have a severe allergy to chicken eggs
- Have had a severe reaction to the flu vaccine in the past
- Have a moderate to severe fever at the time of vaccination (You should wait until you recover)
- Have a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome

You can also help protect yourself from the flu virus by trying to stay away from those that have the flu and making sure to wash your hands regularly.

The following are common symptoms found in people who have the flu:

- Chills
- Fever
- Body or muscle aches
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headache
- Sore throat
- General feeling of being tired

There may also be:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Someone with the flu may only have a few of these symptoms or all of them.

There is no way to know how severe the flu will be this year. It is important to take steps to prevent yourself from getting the flu such as getting the flu vaccine and washing your hands consistently.

It is recommended that anyone over the age of 6 months get the flu vaccine. The vaccine is considered the most important step in flu prevention.



REFERENCES:

- CDC (2013). *What you should know for the 2013-2014 Influenza Season.* <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2013-2014.htm>
- CDC (2013). *Key Facts about Influenza (Flu) and Flu Vaccine.* <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm>

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