

As the flu is caused by a virus, antibiotics are not an effective treatment. Getting a flu shot every year (generally available beginning in October) will help you avoid the flu. The flu shot is highly recommended for:

- people 65 or older,
- nursing home patients,
- people over six months old with health problems, such as asthma, or with long-term diseases, such as HIV or heart disease, and
- people who are often around sick or elderly persons.

To find a flu clinic in your community please visit:

www.flucliniclocator.org

For more information about the cold and flu on the Internet, please visit:

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration
www.fda.gov

American Lung Association
www.lungusa.org

The Nemours Foundation's Center for
Children's Health Media
www.kidshealth.org

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The U.S. Food and Drug Administration

The American Lung Association

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Cold and Flu



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THE COMMON COLD

WHAT ARE COLDS?

Colds are very contagious illnesses caused by viruses that are spread through the air and through direct contact with infected people. Colds are generally more common during cold weather.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A COLD?

The first sign of a cold is usually a tickle or an itch in the back of the throat. People with colds may have breathing problems, feel stuffed up, cough, sneeze, and have a runny nose.

WHO GETS COLDS AND HOW LONG DO COLDS LAST?

Colds rarely last more than two weeks and are generally minor. Adults usually get two colds per year. Children may get as many as eight colds in a year.

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE COLDS GO AWAY?

The best thing to do when you have a cold is to get plenty of rest and to drink lots of liquids. An over-the-counter cold medicine may help relieve the cold symptoms, but colds usually clear up on their own even if you take no medicine. Do not take antibiotics for colds. Antibiotics will not treat or cure colds. Colds are caused by viruses and antibiotics are for use against bacteria, not viruses.

WHAT DO I DO FOR MY SICK CHILD?

A child with a cold will need plenty of rest

and liquids. If you give over-the-counter cold medicine to a child, you should read the instructions closely and to give the medicine exactly as directed.

HOW DO I KEEP FROM GETTING A COLD?

The best way to avoid a cold is to wash your hands often and avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Stay away from people who have colds because colds can be spread through coughing and sneezing. Use a tissue or napkin when you cough or sneeze as this will help stop you from spreading colds to others. Do not share cups, knives, or forks with someone who has a cold. Use disinfectant to clean surfaces like tables, doorknobs, and telephones.

THE FLU (INFLUENZA)

WHAT IS THE FLU?

The flu or influenza is a highly contagious illness spread by viruses.

Flu symptoms are similar to cold symptoms but are much more severe and may include a fever, body aches, and tiredness. The flu usually lasts no more than two weeks.

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE THE FLU GO AWAY?

The best way to get rid of the flu is to get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids. There are over-the-counter flu medicines that will help to ease flu symptoms.

WHAT DO I DO FOR MY SICK CHILD?

A child with the flu will need plenty of rest and liquids. Children with flu symptoms should visit the doctor if people in your community are reported to have the flu.

HOW DO I KEEP FROM GETTING THE FLU?

Wash your hands often and avoid contact with people who have the flu. Use a tissue or napkin when you cough or sneeze as this will help stop you from spreading the flu to others.

