



Pr



up

Influenza (Flu)

Flu is as serious as whooping cough. It can be spread and can lead to hospitalization and sometimes death.

How does flu spread?

Most experts think that flu viruses are spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. A person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own eyes, mouth or nose.

How long can a sick person spread flu to others?

People infected with flu shed virus and may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to about 5-7 days after getting sick. This can be longer in some people, especially children and people with weakened immune systems. This means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

Prevention

#1 A flu vaccine is the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.

- While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine protects against the viruses that research indicates will be most common.

- Flu vaccines protect against three or four viruses; an H1N1, an H3N2, and one or two influenza B viruses, depending on the vaccine.

- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated against the flu each year.

- Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness. Vaccination also is important for health care workers, and those who live with or care for high risk people to keep from spreading flu to high risk people.

- Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. People who care for or live with them should be vaccinated to protect these babies.

#2 Take everyday actions to help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses.

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.

- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.

- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like the flu.