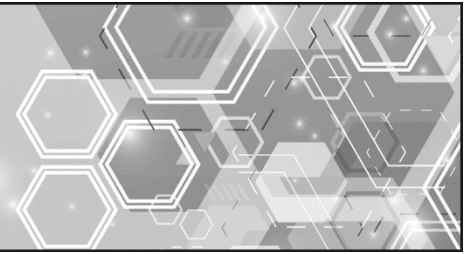




## Durham Region Health Department **Facts about...**



# Influenza (Flu)

## What is it?

- Influenza (Flu) is a respiratory illness caused by a virus that affects your nose, throat, and lungs.
- Most people who get the flu recover within 7-10 days.
- Some people can become very ill and need medical attention.
- It can lead to complications which may result in hospitalization or death.
- People at greatest risk of flu-related complications are adults and children with chronic illnesses, people who live in long-term care homes and other chronic care facilities, people 65 years of age and older, babies under 6 months, children under 5 years of age, indigenous peoples, and pregnant people.

## What are common symptoms of the flu?

- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Stuffy nose and/or sneezing
- Sore throat
- Watery eyes
- Chest discomfort and/or coughing
- Muscles aches and pain
- Extreme weakness and tiredness
- Some people may have nausea/vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults

## How is it spread?

- The flu spreads mostly through coughing and sneezing. It can also be spread by touching a surface that has the flu virus and then touching your mouth, eyes, or nose.  
A person can spread the flu virus from one day before symptoms start and up to 5 days after becoming sick. Children and people with weakened immune systems may spread the virus for a longer time.

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905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | [durham.ca/health](http://durham.ca/health)

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



## How to protect yourself and others from the flu?

- Get your flu vaccine as soon as possible each year. It's the best way to prevent getting and spreading the flu.
- Clean your hands often using soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue (and throw out) or your upper sleeve.
- Keep common surfaces and items clean and disinfected.
- Stay home if you are sick.

## What to do if you or your loved one has the flu?

- Stay home and get plenty of rest.
- Stay hydrated. Drink lots of fluids and avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol.
- Take basic pain or fever relievers but do not give acetylsalicylic acid (ASA or Aspirin®) to children or teenagers under the age of 18.
- Treat muscle pain using a hot water bottle or heating pad. Apply heat for short periods of time.
- Use spray or saline nose drops to treat a stuffy nose.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, tobacco, and second-hand smoke.
- Seek medical care if symptoms do not go away in a few days, get worse, or if you are in a high-risk group.

September 21, 2023

