

KEY FACTS ABOUT SEASONAL INFLUENZA

What is Seasonal Influenza?

Seasonal Influenza, also known as “the flu”, is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It attacks the respiratory tract in humans (nose, throat, and lungs). Seasonal Influenza usually occurs during the months of November through April.

Seasonal Influenza A or B viruses cause epidemics of disease almost every winter. In the United States, seasonal influenza epidemics can cause illness in 10% to 20% of the population and are associated with an average of 36,000 deaths and 200,000 hospitalizations per year.

What are the symptoms of Seasonal Influenza?

Seasonal Influenza is different from a cold. It usually comes on suddenly and may include these symptoms:

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Extreme tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion
- Body aches
- Vomiting and Diarrhea (usually seen in children)

How does Seasonal Influenza spread?

Seasonal Influenza is spread, or transmitted, when a person who has the flu coughs, sneezes, or speaks and sends flu virus into the air, and other people inhale the virus. The virus enters the nose, throat, or lungs of a person and begins to multiply, causing symptoms of Seasonal Influenza. A person with Seasonal Influenza is contagious starting the day before symptoms start and can continue for up to 1 week.

Is there a vaccine available to protect me against Seasonal Influenza?

Yes. The Seasonal Influenza vaccine is an inactivated vaccine that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The Seasonal Influenza vaccine is approved for use in people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.

I had a Seasonal Flu vaccine last year. Will that protect me this year?

No. The Seasonal Flu virus strains change from year to year.

How can I protect myself?

The single best way to protect against Seasonal Influenza each year is to get vaccinated. Public Health authorities recommend the following health and wellness behaviors:

- 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, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are sick. Seasonal Influenza is spread mainly by person-to-person contact through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Eat a well-balanced diet.
- Get plenty of rest.



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