



FLU

The flu, also called influenza, is a respiratory infection caused by viruses. Each year, millions of people in the United States get sick with the flu. Sometimes it causes mild illness. But it can also be serious or even deadly, especially for people over 65, newborn babies, and people with certain chronic illnesses.

The flu is spread from person to person. When someone with the flu coughs, sneezes, or talks, they spray tiny droplets. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person may get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

Symptoms of the flu include:



- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)

Some people may experience vomiting and diarrhea. However, this is more common in children. Some people who get the flu will develop complications. Some of these complications can be serious or even life-threatening. They include:



- Bronchitis
- Ear infection
- Sinus infection
- Pneumonia
- Inflammation of the heart (myocarditis), brain (encephalitis), or muscle tissues (myositis, rhabdomyolysis)

Certain people are more likely to have complications from the flu, including:



- Adults 65 and older
- Pregnant women
- Children younger than 5
- People with certain chronic health conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease

The best way to prevent getting the flu is getting the flu vaccine every year. It is important to cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze and washing your hands (**Medline Plus**)