

BEAT

THE BUG

Influenza: The Basics

What is Influenza? Influenza, also called the flu, is a serious, highly contagious viral infection of the nose, throat and lungs.

- Although colds and other viruses may cause similar symptoms, influenza weakens a person much more than other viruses.

What are the Symptoms?

- ✓ Sudden Fever
- ✓ Sore Throat
- ✓ Dry Cough
- ✓ Extreme weakness and fatigue
- ✓ Chills
- ✓ Muscle aches
- ✓ Headache

Who is at Serious Risk?

- Babies
- Young children
- The elderly
- Those with health conditions like asthma, diabetes, kidney disease, or heart disease.
- *These groups are at particular risk of catching influenza and developing more serious complications from the virus.*



Reduce Germs

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze or cough.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid large, public gatherings if possible.
- Stay at home when you are sick.

Hand Washing

Step 1: Wet Hands

Step 2: Dispense Soap

Step 3: While lathering soap sing two rounds of "Happy Birthday" to kill all germs.

Step 4: Rinse

Step 5: Towel Dry

Step 6: Turn off tap with towel



Be Pro-Active this Flu Season

EAT RIGHT SLEEP

TIGHT: A poor diet and poor sleep both lower your immunity and make you more vulnerable to infections.

EXERCISE REGULARLY:

Regular cardiovascular exercise - walking, biking, aerobics - boosts your immune system.

GET FRESH AIR: A regular dose of fresh air is important, especially in cold weather when central heating dries you out and makes your body more vulnerable to cold and flu viruses.

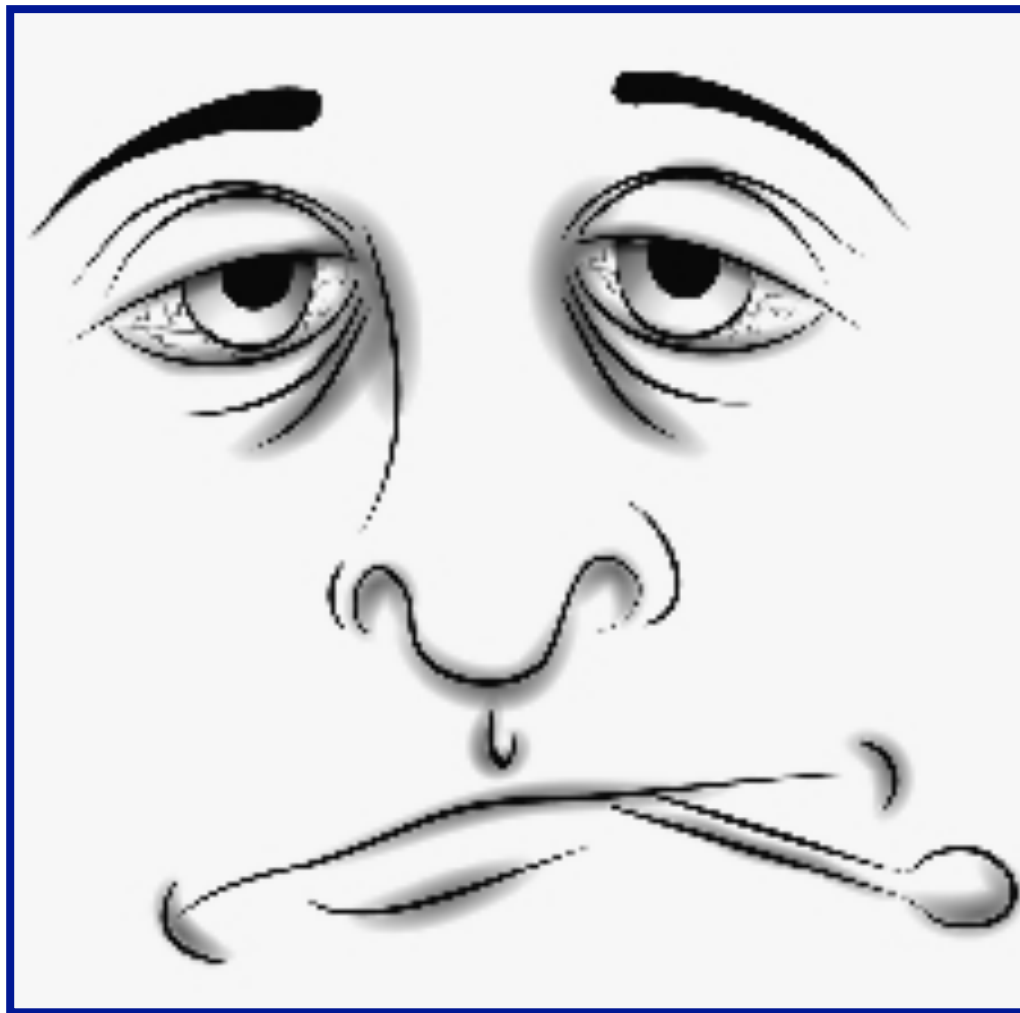
TAKE A SAUNA: Some studies suggest that when you take a sauna you inhale air hotter than 80 degrees, which is a temperature too hot for cold and flu viruses to survive.

LIMIT AIR TRAVEL: New flu strains spread rapidly in November, at the height of holiday travel season, so you may be able to reduce your risk by limiting air travel during the late fall.

DON'T SMOKE: Statistics show that heavy smokers suffer more from severe colds and the flu. Even being around smoke profoundly zaps the immune system. Smoke dries out your nasal passages and paralyzes cilia that help sweep cold and flu viruses out of the nasal passages. Experts contend that *one* cigarette can paralyze cilia for as long as 30 to 40 minutes!

TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTION AROUND

CROWDS: Make sure you wash your hands often in these settings and keep tissue on you in case you need it. Hand sanitizer also helps reduce your chances of picking up germs.



Flu Prevention

- ✓ **Get a flu shot every year**
- ✓ **Wash your hands:** wash hands often and properly, especially after being outside, or going to the bathroom. Viruses can live on hard surfaces for up to 2 days, and on hands for up to 5 minutes.
- ✓ **Be physically active**
- ✓ **Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains:** This will help keep your immune system strong.
- ✓ **Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough and sneeze.** Throw tissue away immediately.



- ✓ **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**
- ✓ **Avoid large, public gatherings if possible.**
- ✓ **When sick, stay at home.** If you have influenza symptoms or feel unwell, stay at home. Do not visit relatives or friends in hospitals or long-term care facilities. Rest and drink plenty of fluids.



Is it a Cold or Influenza?

SYMPTOM	COLD	INFLUENZA
Fever	Rare	Usual; high fever (102 degrees F / 39 degrees C; 104 degree F / 40 degrees C), sudden onset, lasts 3 to 4 days
Headache	Rare	Usual; can be severe
Muscle aches and pains	Sometimes, mild	Usual; often severe
Tiredness and weakness	Sometimes, mild	Usual; severe, may last up to 2 to 3 weeks
Extreme tiredness	Unusual	Usual; early onset, can be severe
Runny, stuffy nose	Common	Common
Sneezing	Common	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Common
Chest soreness and coughing	Sometimes, mild to moderate	Common; can become severe
Complications	Can lead to sinus congestion or infection, ear infections and pneumonias.	Can lead to pneumonia and respiratory failure, and become life-threatening.

Immune Boosters

Protein: provides a foundation for essential components of the immune system, including white blood cells and antibodies.

- Go for moderate portions of protein-rich options such as lower-fat dairy products, fish, lean meat and poultry, eggs, soy foods, legumes and nuts.

Vitamin A: helps maintain healthy mucous membranes, which provide protective barriers throughout the body to help fight off infection by blocking the viruses or bacteria from entering the blood stream.

Sources: meat, dairy products, carrots, squash and pumpkin.

Yogurt: Experts recommend $\frac{3}{4}$ cup per day.

Zinc: Too little or too much of this mineral can lead to a compromised immune system because zinc is significantly involved in immune-system development and reactivity. Meat, seafood, poultry, eggs, legumes, whole grains and milk are all full of zinc.



Garlic: Garlic has immune-enhancing allium compounds that appear to increase the activity of immune cells that help fight viruses.

Vitamin C: helps the immune system by decreasing inflammation. This in turn results in fewer symptoms or pain, such as a sore throat, and also helps maintain healthy mucous membranes.



Sources: Berries, melon, citrus fruits and tomatoes are a few examples of fruits and vegetables that fit the bill.



Source: Health Canada, 2008

