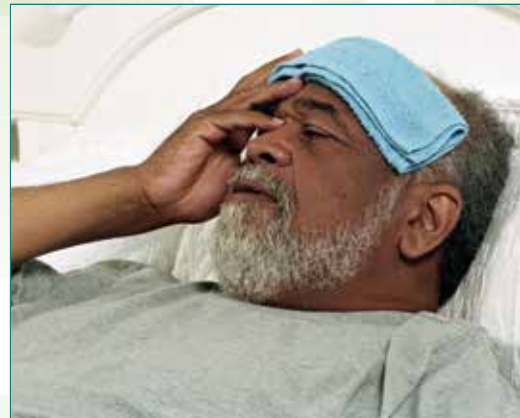
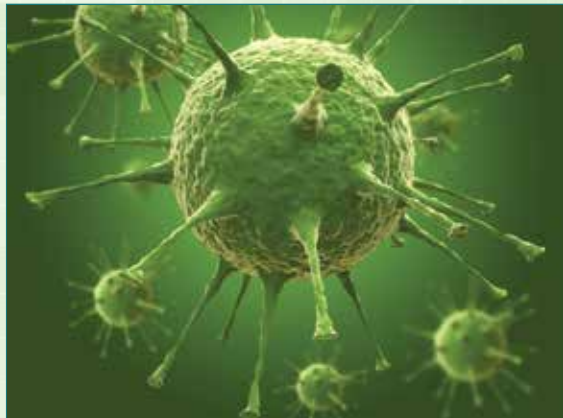


Seasonal Flu



This information from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is for VA staff, volunteers, veterans, their families and their friends. It describes seasonal influenza (flu) symptoms and prevention.

Seasonal flu

- Is a respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses.
- Spreads easily each year, mainly during fall, winter, and spring.
- Is different from a cold – people with flu usually feel achy and have a fever.

How flu spreads

- When a person with flu sneezes, coughs, talks, or laughs, flu virus can spread into the air as droplets.
- The droplets can spread to people and surfaces up to 6 feet away.
- Flu virus can live up to 48 hours on some surfaces.
- Flu virus can spread to your hands if you touch anything that has the virus on it – if you then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth, you might get flu.
- A person can spread flu about 1 day before they feel sick and up to 5 days after getting sick.

Symptoms

- Fever (100°F or higher).
- Body and muscle aches.
- Headache.
- Feeling tired or weak (can be extreme).
- Cough.
- Sore throat.
- Runny or stuffy nose.
- Stomach symptoms (mostly in children).

Illness from flu can

- Start 1 to 4 days after exposure.
- Make other health problems worse.
- Cause pneumonia, hospitalization, and even death.

**You cannot get the flu from a flu shot!
Flu shots are safe and they work!**

If you have flu

- Call your healthcare team within 48 hours for advice about what to do next.
 - ▶ Antiviral medicines may reduce flu symptoms if started within 48 hours of your first symptoms.
- Stay home and rest.
- Drink fluids.
- Take medicines for fever such as acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil® or Motrin®).



Studies show that getting a flu shot can reduce illness and death from flu.



Prevention

- Avoid contact with people who have a cold or the flu.
- Clean hands often.
- Keep hands away from your face, eyes, and mouth.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Stay home when sick and limit contact with others.
- Get your flu shot.
 - ▶ VA encourages everyone age 6 months and older to get a flu shot each year as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

®Brand names included in this information are provided as examples only. Their inclusion does not mean that these products are endorsed by VA or any other Government agency. Also, if a particular brand name is not mentioned, this does not mean or imply that the product is unsatisfactory.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

www.prevention.va.gov/flu

www.cdc.gov/flu

www.flu.gov

www.vaccines.gov



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