

SAFETY

TIP OF THE MONTH

Flu Season

The flu is a contagious infection caused by a set of viruses. The flu occurs most often between November and April with symptoms including fever, headache, fatigue, dry cough, sore throat, nasal congestion and body aches. Flu symptoms are similar to a cold, but tend to be more severe, occur suddenly, and last 1-2 weeks. Take steps to protect yourself and others from the flu and other illnesses.

Most healthy adults may be able to infect other people beginning 1 day **before** symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days **after** becoming sick. Symptoms start 1 to 4 days after the virus enters the body. Some people can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, those persons may still spread the virus to others.

You should seek immediate medical care if you have any of the following:

- * **Wash your hands.** To properly wash your hands, use warm water and soap, and rub your hand vigorously for about 20 seconds—or as long as it takes to say your ABC's. Hand sanitizer works in a pinch, but soap and warm water is best. Germs are everywhere so it is important to wash your hands often.
- * **Clean surfaces.** Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at home, work and school. Some flu viruses can live up to two hours on surfaces like desks, phones and door knobs.
- * **Avoid touching your face,** unless you have clean hands. The eyes, nose and mouth are entry ports for flu viruses.
- * **Cover your cough and sneeze** with a disposable tissue when coughing and sneezing. Dispose of tissues and wash your hands immediately. If you sneeze or cough into your hands, be sure to wash them or use hand sanitizer so that you do not spread germs to surfaces you touch.
- * **Avoid sharing objects** (cups, utensils, etc.). Wipe down shared equipment such as phones and keyboards.
- * **Finally, listen to your body.** Stay home if you have a fever and are coughing. You will feel better, recover faster if you rest and reduce the risk of infecting others..
- * **Keep your immune system strong.** A healthy immune system is better equipped to fight off illnesses. Be sure to get enough sleep, eat right, drink plenty of water, and get regular physical activity. Stress can weaken your immune system. Be sure to stay on top of school and work to help keep yourself well.
- * Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- * Pain or pressure in chest or abdomen
- * Recurring dizziness
- * Confusion
- * Severe or persistent vomiting
- * Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever or worse cough



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