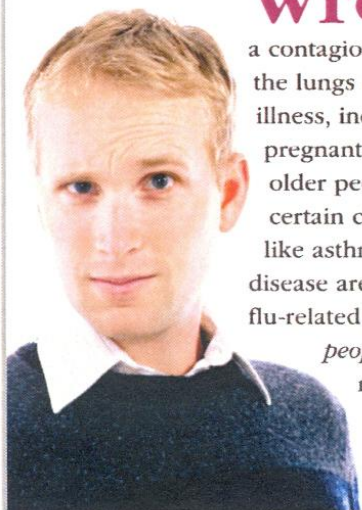


No More Excuses You Need a Flu Vaccine

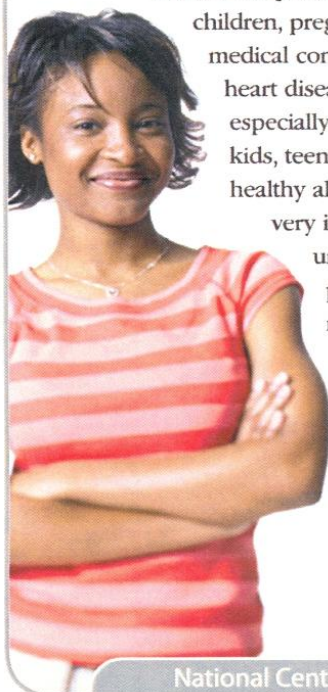
**"Oh, the flu isn't
so bad...right?"**



Wrong The flu (influenza) is a contagious disease which affects the lungs and can lead to serious illness, including pneumonia. While pregnant women, young children, older people, and people with certain chronic medical conditions like asthma, diabetes and heart disease are at increased risk of serious flu-related complications, *even healthy people* can get sick enough to miss work or school for a significant amount of time or even be hospitalized.

**"I'm Healthy
I don't need a flu vaccine."**

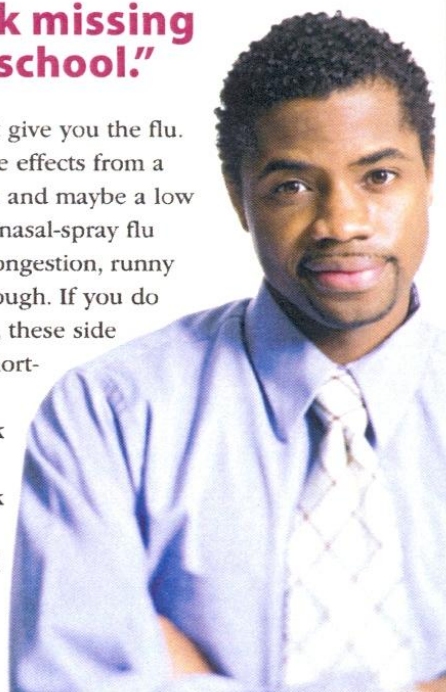
Anyone can become sick with the flu and experience serious complications. Older people, young children, pregnant women and people with medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or kidney disease are at especially high risk from the flu, but kids, teens and adults who are active and healthy also can get the flu and become very ill from it. Flu viruses are unpredictable, and every season puts **you** at risk. Besides, you might be around someone who's at high risk from the flu...a baby...your grandparents, or even a friend. *You don't want to be the one spreading flu, do you?*



"But what if the flu vaccine makes me sick?"

I can't risk missing work or school."

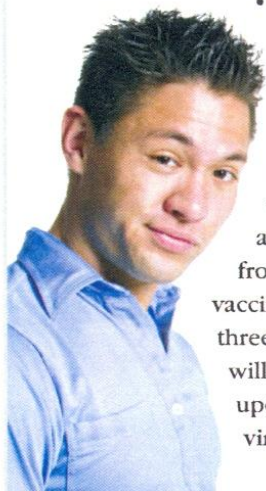
The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu. The most common side effects from a flu shot are a sore arm and maybe a low fever or achiness. The nasal-spray flu vaccine might cause congestion, runny nose, sore throat, or cough. If you do experience them at all, these side effects are mild and short-lived. And that's much better than getting sick and missing several days of school or work or possibly getting a very severe illness and needing to go to the hospital.



**"Wait a minute
I got a flu vaccine
once and still got sick."**

Even if you got a flu vaccine, there are still reasons why you might have felt flu-like symptoms:

- You may have been exposed to a *non-flu virus* before or after you got vaccinated. The flu vaccine can only prevent illnesses caused by flu viruses. It cannot protect against non-flu viruses.
- Or you might have been exposed to flu after you got vaccinated but *before the vaccine took effect*. It takes about two weeks after you receive the vaccine for your body to build protection against the flu.
- Or you may have been exposed to an influenza virus that was very different from the viruses included in that year's vaccine. The flu vaccine protects against the three influenza viruses that research indicates will cause the most disease during the upcoming season, but there can be other flu viruses circulating.



National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases



"It's too late for me to get protection from a flu vaccination this season."

Flu seasons are unpredictable. They can begin early in the fall and last late into the spring. As long as flu season isn't over, it's not too late to get vaccinated, even during the winter. Getting a flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and your family. If you miss getting your flu vaccine in the fall, make it a New Year's resolution—flu season doesn't usually peak until January or February and can last until May. The flu vaccine offers protection for you all season long.



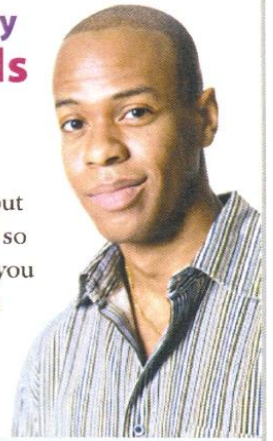
"I got a flu vaccine last year, so I don't need another one."

Your body's level of immunity from a vaccine received last season is expected to have declined. You may not have enough immunity to be protected from getting sick this season. You should get vaccinated again to protect yourself against the three viruses that research suggests are likely to circulate again this season.



"I'll get vaccinated only if my family and friends get sick with flu."

If you wait until people around you get sick from flu, it will probably be too late to protect yourself. It takes about two weeks for the flu vaccine to provide full protection, so the sooner you get vaccinated, the more likely it is that you will be fully protected once the flu begins to circulate in your community. Flu vaccines are easy to find. They are offered in various locations like your doctor's office, chain pharmacies, grocery stores, and health clinics.



"I hate shots."

The very minor pain of a flu shot is nothing compared to the suffering that can be caused by the flu. The flu can make you very sick for several days; send you to the hospital, or worse. For most healthy, non-pregnant people ages 2 through 49 years old, the nasal-spray flu vaccine is a great choice for people who don't like shots. Either way, a shot or spray can prevent you from catching the flu. So, whatever little discomfort you feel from the minor side effects of the flu vaccine is worthwhile to avoid the flu.



"I don't trust that the vaccine is safe."

Flu vaccines have been given for more than 50 years and they have a very good safety track record. Flu vaccines are made the same way each year and their safety is closely monitored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration. Hundreds of millions of flu vaccines have been given safely.



For more information, visit
<http://www.flu.gov>
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu>
or call
800-CDC-INFO



JANUARY

Vaccine Focus: Don't Let Your Guard Down - Influenza is a Serious Illness

Sometimes we forget how tragic influenza can be. Consult a healthcare provider within 48 hours of developing symptoms of influenza. A course of anti-viral medication may be prescribed. Remember that aspirin cannot be given to children and teens.

Consult a healthcare provider if after getting over influenza, the symptoms seem to be re-appearing. This may be a sign that additional treatment is needed

The CDC recommends three actions to fight influenza:

- 1) Take time to get the seasonal influenza vaccine
- 2) Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of influenza
- 3) Take anti-viral medications if prescribed by a healthcare provider

National Influenza Activity for January

- ❑ National, regional and state surveillance continues. To track, go to FluView at www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly

Actions for January

1. Educate the school community about the seriousness of influenza
 - ❑ Compare and contrast the symptoms of respiratory illnesses to seasonal influenza
 - ❑ Actions to take if you become ill (seek health care within 48 hours of symptom onset – anti-virals may be prescribed)
 - ❑ Review school cleaning procedures
 - ❑ Review cough/sneeze etiquette
 - ❑ Refer to October resources.
2. Continue surveillance
3. Continue to promote vaccination
4. Continue the School Contest for reporting vaccination by students and school personnel - Inform everyone the contest will end next month – one more chance to win!

Monthly Message for January

BEING SICK WITH SEASONAL INFLUENZA IS MISERABLE AND CAN BE DEADLY

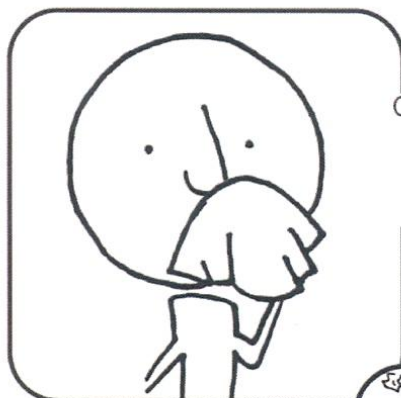
January is one of the peak “flu season” months. Cases of seasonal influenza are being reported by the media. (Highlight local, state, and national reports. Publish absenteeism percentages from school and/or school district.) After December visits with family and friends, some school personnel and students may be incubating unwanted germs or may have already developed illness. Watch for information about the signs and symptoms of influenza and what to do and when throughout school this month. Respiratory illnesses, in addition to seasonal influenza, are common this time of year – but there is a difference. Remember to be vigilant about hand washing, coughing into your sleeve, and contacting your healthcare provider within 48 hours if illness develops. It’s not too late to vaccinate! Check Flu Vaccine Finder at <http://www.flu.gov> for a vaccine location near you.

The School Contest drawing will be held the last school day in January.
The challenge continues!



Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

Cover your Cough



Cover your mouth
and nose with a
tissue when you
cough or sneeze
or

cough or sneeze into
your upper sleeve,
not your hands.

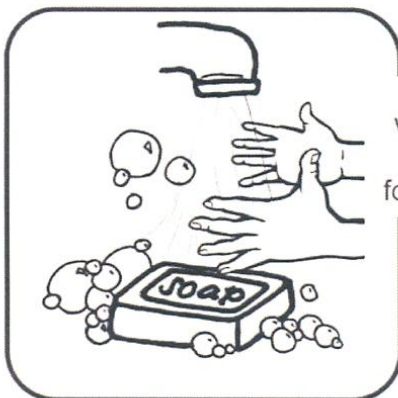


Put your used tissue in
the waste basket.



Clean your Hands

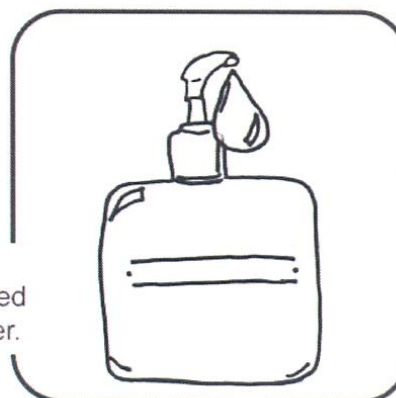
after coughing or sneezing.



Wash hands
with soap and
warm water
for 20 seconds

or

clean with
alcohol-based
hand cleaner.



Minnesota Department of Health
717 SE Delaware Street
Minneapolis, MN 55414
612-676-5414 or 1-877-676-5414
www.health.state.mn.us



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HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INFLUENZA AND A “COLD”

Learn the differences between influenza and the common cold. Call your healthcare provider right away if influenza is suspected in the family to see what treatment is needed.

People sometimes call gastroenteritis the “flu” or “stomach flu.” It is not the same as seasonal influenza, which is a respiratory infection. However children , more commonly than adults, may complain of stomach aches with seasonal influenza. More information about gastroenteritis can be found at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001298/>.

The following chart highlights information from CDC and The Children’s Hospital (Denver, CO) and can help you compare symptoms of the common cold and seasonal influenza.

	Influenza Symptoms	Cold Symptoms
Onset	Sudden	Gradual
Fever	High	None to low grade
Fatigue	Severe	Mild
Cough	Severe	Mild to Moderate
Throat	Sore	May be sore
Headache	Achy	None
Appetite	Decreased	May be decreased
Muscles	Achy	No aches
Chills	Yes	None
Stuffy, runny nose	Sometimes	Common
Complications	Bronchitis/Pneumonia	Earache/Sinus infection
Prevention	Annual vaccine	Good hygiene
Treatment	Antiviral drugs in 24-48 hrs	Symptomatic relief

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/ga/coldflu.htm> and <http://thechildrenshospital.org/wellness/topics/flu>