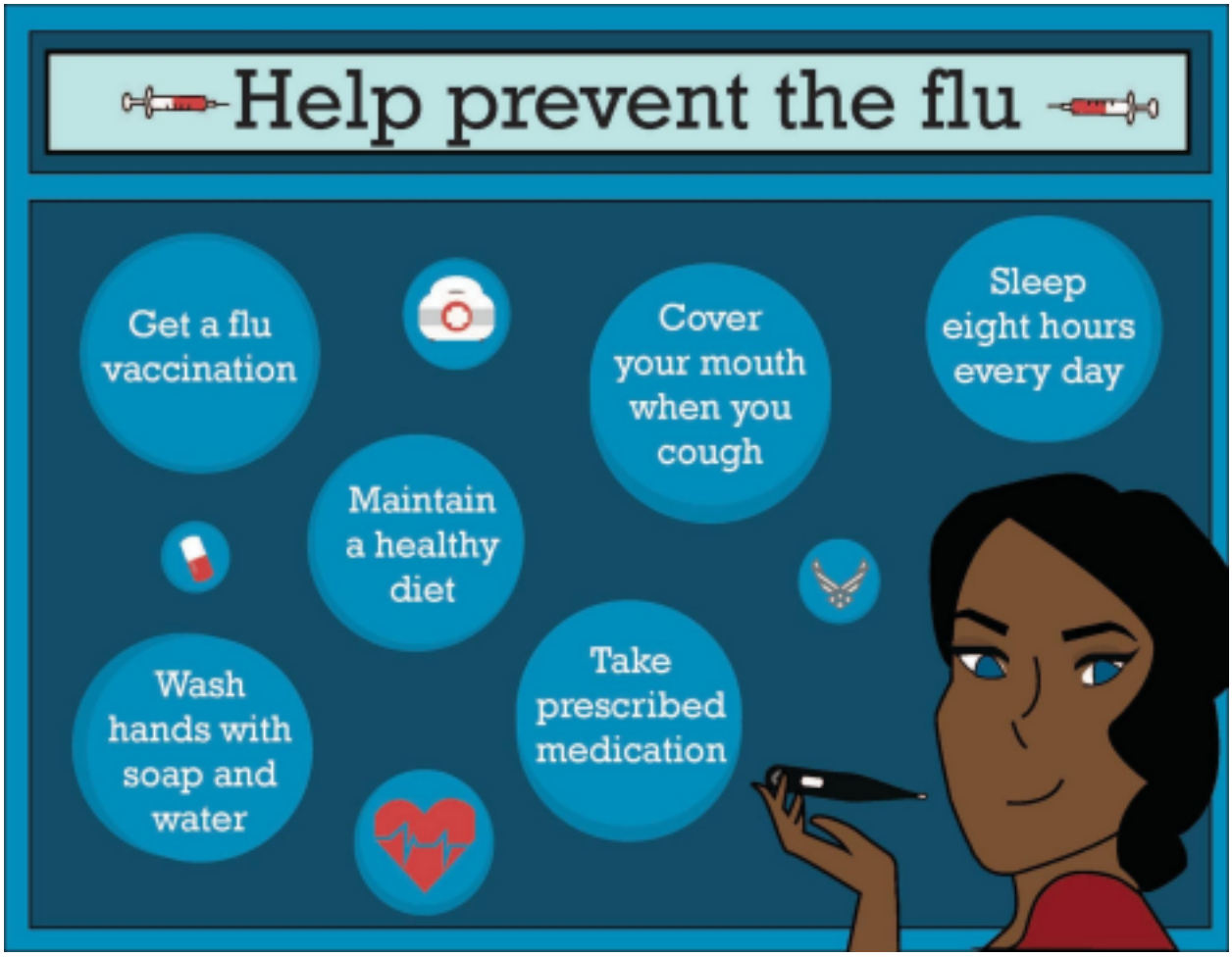


Flu Season Is Here!

Each year millions of people across the United States come down with the flu. People in every age group — including children and teens — can catch it.

What Is the Flu?

Flu is the common name for influenza, a virus that infects the nose, throat, and lungs. When you're sick with a virus, your body builds your immune system by making antibodies against the virus. That means you usually don't get that particular type of virus again. Unfortunately, flu viruses can mutate (change) each year. So you aren't protected from getting the flu forever. Some years the change in the flu virus is slight. So, if you do get the flu, it's mild. The antibodies from having the flu before offers you some protection. But every few years, the flu virus goes through a major change and many people get severe cases.

How Does the Flu Spread?

The flu virus spreads through the air when a person who has the virus sneezes, coughs, or speaks. The flu can sometimes spread through objects that someone with the virus touched, sneezed, or coughed on. When a healthy person touches these contaminated items and then touches their mouth or nose, the virus can enter their body. People carrying the virus can be contagious 1 day before their symptoms start

and about 5 to 7 days after they first get symptoms. So it's possible to spread the flu before you even realize that you're sick. Flu outbreaks often start in schools and then move quickly through a community as students spread the virus to family members and people around them.

How Do I Know If I Have the Flu?

Flu symptoms start 1–4 days after a person was exposed to the virus. The main symptoms of flu are:

- Headache
- sore throat
- a high fever
- chills
- muscle aches
- stuffy nose
- dry cough
- feeling very tired
- loss of appetite



What to Do When if the Flu BugsYou

If you get the flu, the best way to take care of yourself is to rest in bed and drink lots of liquids like water and other non-caffeinated drinks. Stay home from school until you feel better and your temperature has returned to normal for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. Most people get better on their own after the virus runs its course. But call your doctor if you have the flu and:
you're getting worse instead of better
you have trouble breathing
you have a medical condition (for example, diabetes, heart problems, asthma, or other lung problems)
Antibiotics don't work on viruses, so they won't help someone with the flu get better.

What's the Flu Vaccine?

Everyone older than 6 months should get a flu vaccine.

Flu vaccines are available as a shot or as a nasal spray:

The shot contains killed flu viruses.
The nasal spray contains weakened live flu virus, which can't cause the flu.
Both will make your body create antibodies that fight off infection if you come into contact with the flu virus. This flu season, get whichever vaccine your doctor recommends. The flu vaccine is usually given a few weeks before flu season begins to allow the body time to develop antibodies beforehand. It's best to get it before the end of October. But you can still get a flu vaccine even after flu season starts.

What else can you do?
Wash your hands well and often. Avoid sharing cups, utensils, or towels with others. Use tissues whenever you sneeze or cough to avoid spreading the virus.
If you do get the flu this season, take care of yourself and call your doctor with any questions or concerns.

As a reminder of the district's school policy:

The Parkland School District has established the following guidelines for sickness. If a student becomes ill, he/she should stay home until fully recovered. Please do not send your child to school if any of the following symptoms are present:

Note: Keep home when resolved for 24 hours without medication for fever, vomiting and diarrhea.

- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- Vomiting related to illness
- Diarrhea related to illness
- Severe coughing
- Suspicious skin rash

For respiratory virus prevention/illness such as flu, COVID, etc. please refer to the CDC guidelines here:

https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/prevention/precautions-when-sick.html