

Flu Symptoms

When to Seek Medical Care

This information is provided by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for Veterans, their families, friends, volunteers, and employees. It describes common symptoms of influenza (flu) and how to decide when to stay at home or when to seek medical care.

Common Flu Symptoms

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

If You Have Common Flu Symptoms

- Stay home.
- Rest.
- Drink fluids.
- Take medicines for fever such as acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil® or Motrin®).
- 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.

Stop the Spread of Flu

- **Get a flu shot.**
- **Stay home when sick.**
- **Clean your hands.**
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes.**



WARNING!

Moderate or severe flu symptoms are signs of complications from flu!

When to Seek Medical Care

Call your healthcare team within 48 hours:

- If you have common flu symptoms or
- If you have moderate flu symptoms:
 - ▶ Not able to drink enough fluids (Dark urine or feeling dizzy when standing are signs that you are not drinking enough fluids).
 - ▶ Fever of 100° F or higher for 3 or more days.
 - ▶ Feel better, and then get a fever or sore throat again.

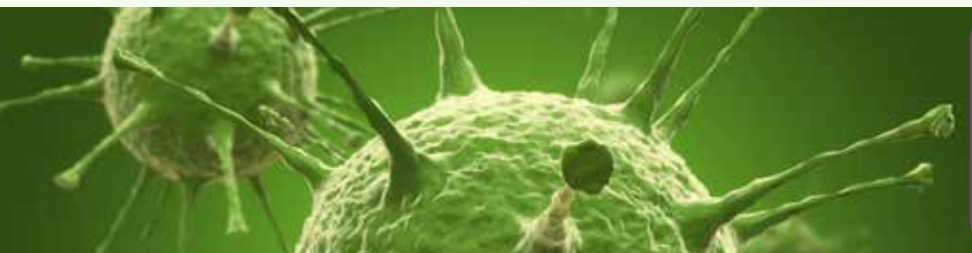
Go right away for medical care:

- If you have severe flu symptoms:
 - ▶ Shortness of breath or wheezing.
 - ▶ Coughing up blood.
 - ▶ Pain or pressure in your chest when breathing.
 - ▶ Chest pain, especially if you have heart disease like angina or congestive heart failure.
 - ▶ Trouble with balance, walking or sitting up, or becoming confused.

Flu vs. Cold: Know the Difference

Symptoms	Flu	Cold
Fever	Usual - 100° F or higher	Rare
Chills	Common	Uncommon
Body or muscle aches	Common – can be severe	Uncommon or mild
Headache	Common – can be severe	Uncommon
Feeling tired and weak	Common – can be severe	Sometimes – usually mild: you don't feel tired
Cough	Common – can last 2-3 weeks	Common – mild to moderate hacking
Sneezing	Sometimes	Common
Runny or stuffy nose	Sometimes	Common
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common
Chest discomfort	Common – can be severe	Sometimes – can be mild to moderate

®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.



Everyone, including the sick person, should clean their hands often and cover their coughs and sneezes.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

www.prevention.va.gov/flu

www.cdc.gov/flu

www.flu.gov

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
VHA National Center
of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
VHAFluProgram@va.gov

September 2020 | FLU FS-9

This material is NOT copyrighted and may be reproduced

prevention.va.gov/flu



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs