

Is it a Cold, the Flu, or Bacterial Meningitis?

Symptoms	Cold	Flu (Seasonal, H1N1 & ILI)	Bacterial Meningitis
Prevalence / Onset	Very common / Gradual	Fairly common / Sudden	Extremely rare / Sudden
Fever	Rare	Usual; high (100°F to 102°F); lasts 3 to 4 days	*Characteristically high (over 102°F)
Headache	Rare	Common	*Severe, sudden headache with mental changes (disorientation, difficulty communicating)
General Aches, Pains	Slight	Usual; often severe	*Extremely stiff neck / back
Fatigue, Weakness	Mild	Usual; can last up to 2 to 3 weeks	Sometimes
Extreme Exhaustion	Never	Usual; at the beginning of the illness	Sometimes
Stuffy Nose	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes	Rare
Sore Throat	Common	Sometimes	Rare
Chest Discomfort, Cough	Mild to moderate; hacking cough	Common; can become severe	Sometimes
Rash	No	No	*Purplish, flat rash may be present
What to do if you are sick	Stay home when ill, To ease symptoms, use antihistamines, decongestants, OTC (over-the-counter) pain relievers/fever reducers, and/or throat lozenges.	Stay home when ill, stay 6 feet away from others, and do not return to work or class until fever is gone for 24 hours. Rest, drink plenty of fluids, use ibuprofen or acetaminophen for aches and fever.	* Seek immediate emergency medical care if two or more of the gold highlighted symptoms are present.
Prevention	Wash hands often, cover your mouth, stay home when ill, avoid close contact with anyone with a cold	Seasonal flu vaccine is your best prevention. Wash hands often, <u>cover your cough</u> , stay home when ill, avoid close contact with anyone with flu-like illness.	Menactra (meningitis) vaccine.
Complications	Sinus congestion, middle ear infection, asthma	Bronchitis, dehydration, pneumonia; can be life threatening especially for those at risk for complications.	Without medical treatment, bacterial meningitis is nearly always fatal.

Information in this brochure has been adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

When to Seek Medical Advice

Most people with flu or influenza-like illness (ILI) are expected to recover without needing medical care.

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

If you have flu symptoms and are at risk for complications, consult your doctor right away. Those usually considered at high risk for complications include:

- People 65 or older (for seasonal flu)
- Young children
- People with serious chronic health issues (e.g., congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes)
- People who have disease or treatments that weaken the immune system
- Women who are pregnant

To speak with a nurse at Olin Student Health Center, call **517.353.5557**

To make an appointment, call **517.353.4660**



Flu Facts:
How to prevent it, recognize it, and treat it.

Phone Information Nurse: 517.353.5557
olin.msu.edu
cdc.gov/flu/

Influenza (Flu) = A highly contagious viral infection of the lungs.

- **Influenza (the flu)** is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times lead to death. Some people, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk for serious flu complications. The best way to prevent flu is by getting vaccinated each year.

The flu is caused by a virus that affects the nose, throat, and lungs. It usually lasts between 3 – 7 days. People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)

*It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

What if my roommate has the flu or flu-like illness?

- You should limit contact with your sick roommate and try to maintain a distance of 6 feet from him or her.
- If close contact cannot be avoided, your sick roommate should wear a surgical mask, if tolerable, when he or she is around you or other people.
- You should frequently clean commonly touched surfaces.

Practice good health habits daily to help prevent flu

- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of each tissue after use.
- **Wash your hands** often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds. If water is unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand gel.
- **Don't touch your eyes, nose, and mouth.** Flu spreads when a person touches items covered with virus and then touches his eyes, nose or mouth.
- **Stay home when you're sick** or have flu symptoms.
- **Avoid close contact with people who are ill.** Maintain at minimum a distance of 3 feet, and ideally a distance of 6 feet.
- **Disinfect items people touch** (like door knobs, keyboards, faucets, remote controls, phones, and switches). Use a labeled household disinfectant.
- **Practice other good health habits.** Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritiously.
- **Avoid smoking.** Smoking may increase the risk of serious problems if you get the flu.

Besides hand-washing, the best protection is flu vaccine.

What should I know about the flu vaccine?

- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.
- While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine protects against the three viruses that research suggests will be most common.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated against the flu as soon as the vaccine is available.
- People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older.
- Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.
- Vaccination also is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for high risk people to keep from spreading flu to high risk people.
- Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. People who care for them should be vaccinated instead.

Self Care Tips for Flu

Those with flu-like symptoms should “**self-isolate**”. Self-isolation is when sick people stay home and away from other people until they no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (chills, feel very warm, have flushed appearance, or are sweating).

During the period of self-isolation, sick people should limit contact with others and try to maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from people. If close contact cannot be avoided, sick people should wear a surgical mask when they are around other people, if they can tolerate it.

Additionally, those with symptoms should:

- **Take a fever-reducing medication** that contains acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen (such as Motrin). These medicines can help bring fever down and relieve pain. Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) should not be given to those younger than 18 years of age; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.
- **Rest in bed** (especially if you have a fever).
- **Drink decaffeinated liquids** (water, tea, soda drinks, juice, clear soup, etc.). It is important to drink fluids early and often to prevent dehydration.
- **Eat easily digestible foods** that appeal to you such as pasta, rice, applesauce or crackers.
- **Recovery from flu:** Once the worst has passed, continue to eat and rest for faster recovery. Increase activity based on how you feel.

NOTE: The only real cure for flu is time.

For information about availability of the flu vaccine, please refer to the MSU Student Health web site:

<http://olin.msu.edu/>

To schedule a medical appointment at Olin or any of the Neighborhood Clinics,
call 517-353-4660.