



Stay Flu Free this Winter

Influenza—or “the flu”—is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by viruses. Influenza can lead to dehydration, bacterial pneumonia, and other severe complications such as worsening of chronic conditions including diabetes and asthma. In fact, each year in the United States, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from complications of the flu, and approximately 36,000 people die as a result of the illness, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Fortunately, flu vaccinations can help some people to prevent the flu. For those who do come down with the flu this winter, the good news is that healthy individuals usually recover from flu without complications.

Flu Symptoms

- Fever
- Headache
- Extreme tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches

What to Do to Avoid the Flu

Getting a flu shot each year is the best way to avoid influenza. The flu shot is an inactivated vaccine given with a needle, generally in the arm. Exposure to the flu virus stimulates the body’s immune response, producing protective antibodies that result in immunity. Because the viruses that cause influenza are always changing, it is important to be immunized against the current strain of influenza every year. Additionally:

- Wash your hands frequently to protect yourself from germs
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth to minimize exposure to germs
- Avoid close contact with people who have flu-like symptoms

What to Do if You Have the Flu

- Get plenty of rest
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid using alcohol and tobacco
- Consider over-the-counter medications to relieve symptoms

*(*Do not give aspirin to children or teenagers who develop flu-like symptoms.)*

Consult your physician before receiving a flu shot if you have experienced a severe allergic reaction to eggs or to a flu shot in the past, or if you have a history of Guillain-Barre syndrome.

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DON'T LET THE FLU BUG YOU THIS YEAR

Influenza, or flu, is a virus that spreads rapidly from person to person. Flu viruses are always changing, or mutating. For this reason, it is important to receive the latest flu vaccine before the start of flu season each year. For more information, contact your physician. If you do not have a physician, contact Saint Joseph Health System at (859) 219-0530 to learn how you can receive a flu vaccine.

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