

# HealthWise

Winter 2018/19

## > What is the flu?

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness that can result in hospitalization or death. The elderly, young children and people with certain health conditions are at high risk of serious flu complications. Some confuse a cold or gastroenteritis (stomach flu) as “flu,” however, influenza is a different virus and more dangerous than a cold or stomach flu.

What is the difference between a cold and the flu?

### FLU VS. COLD

Signs and Symptoms	Influenza	Cold
<b>Symptom Onset</b>	Abrupt	Gradual
<b>Fever</b>	Usual; lasts 3-4 days	Rare
<b>Aches</b>	Usual; often severe	Slight
<b>Chills</b>	Fairly Common	Uncommon
<b>Fatigue, weakness</b>	Usual	Sometimes
<b>Sneezing</b>	Sometimes	Common
<b>Stuffy Nose</b>	Sometimes	Common
<b>Sore Throat</b>	Sometimes	Common
<b>Chest discomfort, cough</b>	Common; can be severe	Mild to moderate; hacking cough
<b>Headache</b>	Common	Rare

It is important to note that colds come on gradually, but the flu is very abrupt. Many describe it as feeling as if they were “hit by a bus.” Flu is spread by tiny droplets made when people who are infected cough, sneeze or talk.

Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections and worsening of chronic medical conditions.

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## Foods for a healthy immune system

## Heart attack warning signs for women

## Supporting someone who's grieving



# HealthExtra



## > RAISING HEART-HEALTHY KIDS

The majority of American children don't make the cut when it comes to heart health, says a new study by the American Heart Association. An alarming 91 percent of children have unhealthy diets, relying heavily on added sugars and refined carbs. Not only do children eat poorly, but less than half of kids ages 6 to 11 got the recommended 60 minutes of exercise that contribute to heart health.

Make sure your kids are heart healthy by trying some of these tips:

- ✔ **Lead by example** // If you follow a healthy lifestyle, your kids will notice. Make sure you eat right and stay active along with your children.
- ✔ **Make dinner a family affair** // If everyone eats together, children are more likely to eat healthier foods. Try planning your weekly menu together.
- ✔ **Teach your kids about nutrition labels** // Nutrition labels are there for a reason! Make sure

your kids are aware of what they are putting into their bodies and what it means.

- ✔ **Don't make being active a chore** // No one wants to be told go to for a run. Encourage your children to make physical activity fun by biking around the block with the neighbors or taking the dog outside for a game of fetch.
- ✔ **Celebrate good behavior with good habits** // Instead of rewarding your children with more screen time or a sugary treat, offer to play a game with them or take them to the park.

It's never too early to encourage a heart-healthy lifestyle. Talk to your child's doctor about ways to build healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

## > FAST FACTS ON NOSEBLEEDS

It's not uncommon to have the occasional nosebleed, especially during the fall and winter months when indoor heating dries out the air. There are two main types of nosebleeds:

**Anterior nosebleed**, which is the most common type, occurs when the very small blood vessels in the inside of the front of the nose break and bleed. An anterior nosebleed is primarily caused by dry air. The dry air can irritate and dry out the nasal membrane leaving scabbing that can bleed when picked at.

**Posterior nosebleed** is more common in adults than children. With a posterior nosebleed the bleed comes from the deeper part of

the nose and goes down the throat. Causes for posterior nosebleeds can include high blood pressure and nose/face injuries.

### STOP THE FLOW

Most nosebleeds can be stopped at home with these tips:

- ✔ Stand or sit up.
- ✔ Tilt your head forward.
- ✔ Pinch your nose by pushing your nostrils together.

Seek medical attention if your nose is still bleeding after 20 minutes or the bleeding is a result of an injury to your face.

If you have frequent nosebleeds, you should talk to your doctor at your next visit.

## 3 ways to prevent nosebleeds

- 1 Spread petroleum jelly or an antibiotic ointment with a cotton swab inside your nostrils to keep the interior of your nose moist.
- 2 Use a humidifier in your house, especially during times when the heat is running, to help minimize the effects of dry air.
- 3 Keep fingernails short for children who have a tendency to pick at their nose.

## > ACTIVE SENIORS MORE LIKELY TO AVOID INJURIES

Exercise is good for you, but did you know that it can help you avoid injuries and maintain mobility as you age? Researchers found that seniors who adopted a regular exercise routine reduced their likelihood of suffering a disabling illness or injury, and those who did become disabled were more likely to recover.

## BUILD ON THE BENEFITS OF MOVEMENT

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, falls are a threat to older adults and reduce their ability to live independently. Each year 3 million older people are treated in emergency rooms for fall injuries. Staying active can help reduce the risk of fall injuries and bring added health benefits such as a lower risk of depression, heart disease and stroke, diabetes and some cancers.

Before getting started, schedule a checkup with your doctor and ask what types of activities are most appropriate for you. Some examples include:

- ✓ Aerobic activities, such as walking, swimming and biking
- ✓ Balance training, including standing on one foot and heel-to-toe walking
- ✓ Flexibility exercises, such as shoulder stretches and calf stretches
- ✓ Strength exercises, such as weightlifting and resistance band exercises

## EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS

If you're not a fan of treadmill running or sweating it out in the gym, that's OK. The good news is that exercising doesn't need to be strenuous in order to be effective. Moderate amounts of activity in small bursts throughout the day can help you get fit and stay strong as you age. Aim for 30 minutes a day, five days per week.

Activities like gardening, dancing, playing golf or even walking at the mall with a friend are all great ways to stay active. As an added bonus, exercising with others can help you build social connections and stay mentally sharp.

Ask your doctor what types of activities are best for you.



## HOW CAN YOU PREVENT THE FLU?

- ✓ **Get a flu vaccine each year.** It is a myth that the flu shot can actually give you the flu. The vaccine is not a live virus, therefore you cannot become infected by the vaccine. You may, however, still get the flu after you have been vaccinated, but your symptoms and the severity of the flu tends to be much less severe than if you had NOT received the vaccine. You must get a flu shot every year since the formulation of the vaccine is updated annually to keep up with the changing viruses that create the flu. While it is best to get a flu vaccine at the beginning of the flu season (usually late September or early October) you can receive a vaccine any time during the flu season to help protect yourself.
- ✓ **Maintain good hydration, rest and good nutrition.** Some people believe that loading up on vitamin C will take away a cold or the flu, but unfortunately there is no proof that this actually helps.
- ✓ **Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.** If soap is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ✓ **If you are sick, limit contact with others as much as possible.** If you have the flu, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, except to get medical care. Avoid close contact with others who are ill.
- ✓ **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth** as germs spread in this way.
- ✓ **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and make sure to wash your hands.
- ✓ **Disinfect surfaces and objects** that may be contaminated with germs.

## HOW IS INFLUENZA TREATED?

In order to differentiate between a cold and the flu you will need to be diagnosed by a physician. There are antiviral drugs that may be a treatment option to help decrease the severity and length of your illness.

Please visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for more information regarding this year's flu season and vaccination calendar.

HealthWise is a community educational service provided by

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# Caring for Generations. Caring for Life.



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