

# Taking Care of Yourself: What to Do if You Get Sick with Flu

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## Flu Symptoms

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

Symptoms of flu include:

- fever (usually high)
- headache
- extreme tiredness
- dry cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle aches
- Stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, also can occur but are more common in children than adults.

## If You Get Sick

Most healthy people recover from the flu without complications. If you get the flu:

- Stay home from work or school.
- Get lots of rest, drink plenty of liquids, and avoid using alcohol and tobacco.
- There are over-the-counter (OTC) medications to relieve the symptoms of the flu (but never give aspirin to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms, particularly fever).
- Remember that serious illness from the flu is more likely in certain groups of people including people 65 and older, pregnant women, people with certain chronic medical conditions and young children.
- Consult your doctor early on for the best treatment, but also be aware of emergency warning signs that require urgent medical attention.

## Emergency Warning Signs

**Seek emergency medical care** if you or someone you know is having any of following warning signs discussed below.

**In children**, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

**In adults**, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

**Seek emergency medical care** if you or someone you know is experiencing any of the signs above.