



Flu Season is Here!

Tips to Avoid Getting the Flu

Flu Season is here so be sure to protect yourself against the flu bug! Here are five easy ways to prevent getting the flu:

- 1. Wash your hands.** That's right, washing your hands with soap in warm water for 20 seconds kills flu germs. Dry your hands with a paper towel then throw the towel away.
- 2. Don't touch your face.** Germs can be on counter tops, towels, handrails or other people. If you touch a germ then touch your face, you can catch the flu. It enters the body through your nose or mouth, so keep your fingers away.
- 3. Avoid people that are sick.** Teach children to cough into their elbow and use paper towels to dry their hands and face when they are sick. This will reduce the spread of the virus.
- 4. Don't share stuff.** Sharing isn't always a good thing—especially when it comes to cups, utensils, phones and other objects that can spread flu germs.
- 5. Stay well rested and hydrated.** If your body is tired or does not get enough fluids, it has to work harder to fight off germs. Get extra rest if you are starting to feel tired.
- 6. Stay home if you start to feel sick.** If you feel sick, you probably are. Listen to your body. Stay home and rest.



Should I get the flu shot?

Getting the flu shot can reduce your risk of getting the flu. The United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention generally recommends that people at a high risk for complications from the flu should get the flu shot.

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Check Out the Molina Healthcare Website

Check out the Molina Healthcare website at www.MolinaHealthcare.com. You can use the Internet for free at most public libraries. Click on the "Member" button and drag your mouse down to your state. You can get information on our website about:

- Molina Healthcare's contracted providers and hospitals
- Your benefits
- What to do if you get a bill or a claim
- FAQs (frequently asked questions and answers)
- Preferred drug list (approved drugs that providers can prescribe)
- How to contact a Nurse to help you with your health care
- How to get primary care, hospital, specialty, and emergency services
- How to get care after normal office hours
- Preventive health guidelines and immunization schedule
- Your rights and responsibilities and the privacy of your information
- Restrictions on benefits or how to obtain care outside the Molina Healthcare service area
- Quality Improvement, Health Education, and Disease Management programs
- How to voice a complaint or appeal a medical decision
- How we decide about using new technology

You can ask for printed copies of anything posted on the website by calling **1-800-642-4168**. Your member handbook is also a good resource. You can find it on our website.

Breathe with EaseSM is developed by Molina Healthcare, Inc.

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Molina Healthcare does not discriminate in providing medical care on the basis of preexisting health conditions, race, color, religion, age, national origin, disability, or sex.

Questions about your health?

Call Our Nurse Advice Line!

1-888-275-8750 (English)
1-866-648-3537 (Español/Spanish)

OPEN 24 HOURS!

Your family's health is our priority!

For the hearing impaired please call
TTY/866-735-2929 English
TTY/866-833-4703 Spanish



Flu Season is Here! *Continued...*

These people include:

- Children aged 6 months through 18 years of age
- Pregnant women
- People 50 years of age and older
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions such as asthma or diabetes
- People who live in nursing homes or other long term care facilities.
- People who care for those at high risk for complications from the flu
- People who have household contact with those at high risk for complications from the flu
- Day care workers of children 6 months of age or younger. The children are too young to be vaccinated so we need to reduce the risk of passing the virus to them.
- Health care workers

Some people think the flu shot gives you the flu. This is not true. Please talk with your provider to see if the flu shot is right for you.

What can I do for myself if I get the flu?

Stay home and take good care of yourself when you are sick. Eat well and drink fluids to stay hydrated. Try drinking water and making yourself soup. Popsicles are another way to help children stay hydrated. You should also get plenty of rest. Over-the-counter medicines may be used to reduce fever, aches and pains. If you have other medical conditions or take other medicines, ask your provider or call a nurse before taking additional medicines.

Remember, the flu is a virus. That means antibiotics won't cure it. Antibiotics fight illness caused by bacteria. They don't work against things usually caused by viruses like colds, the flu, or most coughs and sore throats.

You may call Molina's Nurse Advice Line at any time 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to get more information or ask questions. The phone number is on the back of your member card (1-888-275-8750 English; 1-866-648-3537 Spanish).

What Makes Asthma Worse?

Asthma is a chronic disease of the airways. It causes symptoms like wheezing, breathlessness, tightness in your chest, and a cough. There are many things in the environment that can bring on your asthma symptoms. You may be allergic to animal dander, pollen from trees or grass, or mold. Other things like cigarette smoke, cold air, emotional upset, or viruses can also trigger asthma.

Your body acts on these triggers. The airways might get narrower and get clogged with mucous. They could also get inflamed or swollen. This makes it hard for air to get into and out of your lungs.

Asthma attacks can be mild to severe. It is important to know what things make your asthma worse. Do your best to avoid them.

The **National Heart Lung and Blood Institute** recommends the following:

- If animal dander is a problem, keep your pet out of the house or at least out of your bedroom.
- Do not smoke or allow smoking in your home.
- If pollen is a problem, stay indoors with the air conditioner on, if possible, when the pollen count is high.
- To control dust mites, wash your sheets, blankets, pillows, and stuffed toys once a week in hot water.
- If cold air bothers you, wear a scarf over your mouth and nose in the winter.
- If you have symptoms when you exercise or do routine activities, talk with your doctor. Together you can find ways to be active without having asthma symptoms. Physical activity is important.

If you do not keep your asthma under control, it could get worse. Sometimes people use quick-relief inhalers too much. Let your doctor know if you use more than one canister a month. Your treatment plan may need to change.

Use your medications the right way in order to treat your asthma best. If you do not use your inhaler correctly, the medication will not end up in your lungs where it should be. Using a spacer with your metered dose inhaler can help.

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What Makes Asthma Worse?,

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Some medicine can interact with asthma medicine and make your asthma worse. Be sure to tell your healthcare provider about all medicines that you are taking. It is a good idea to check with the pharmacist before purchasing over the counter medication.

Take control of your health this winter season and stay on top of your asthma. It's amazing what a few simple changes can do!

Emergency Preparations

Asthma attacks can range from mild to severe. Part of keeping your asthma in good control is having an emergency plan. The plan includes how to adjust your medicines based on your symptoms and who to call for help. That way everyone knows what to do if you have a severe attack.

First, you should have some basic information written down. Keep this information handy. This includes your name, a person to contact in case of an emergency along with their phone number. It should also include your health care provider's name and phone number.

You should also know your best peak flow meter number. A peak flow meter is a hand-held device. It measures how fast you can blow air out of your lungs.

The **American Lung Association** divides up asthma symptoms into three zones. The **green zone** means that you are not having problems with your asthma. The **yellow zone** means that your asthma is getting worse. You might have problems breathing, or have a cough, wheeze or tight chest. In the yellow zone, your peak flow meter reading is between 50% and 80% of your personal best.

The **red zone** means that there is a medical emergency. You have trouble breathing and medicine is not helping. Call an ambulance if danger signs are present. Danger signs include trouble walking or talking due to shortness of breath, and/or your lips or fingernails are blue.

Ask your health care provider to help you with an asthma action plan. Make sure the form is updated frequently. It doesn't take long, and it could save your life!

Information for Kids

Being a kid and having asthma can be hard. It may cause you to miss school or limit certain activities that you like to do. You are not alone. Asthma is the most common chronic illness in children. Chronic means that it happens every day.



Asthma affects your airways. The tubes that carry air in and out of your lungs get smaller. This makes it hard for air to get in and out. Also, the inside of the airways are swollen. They can get clogged with mucous and make it hard to breathe.

You might have some of these symptoms:

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Chest congestion
- Chest tightness

Do you know what sets off your asthma? Some common triggers are:

- Cigarette smoke
- Exercise
- Cold air
- Dust mites
- Pet dander
- Pollen
- Mold
- Colds

If you know what makes your asthma worse, then you can do your best to avoid it.

You might take medicine for your asthma. It is important to take your medicine. It will help you feel better. It will keep your asthma in control so you can play and enjoy your favorite activities.

It is a good idea to have an asthma action plan. Ask your parent or guardian to help you create a plan. Your provider can help too. If you have an asthma attack, the plan can help you get good care. Make sure that people like teachers and coaches get a copy of the plan.

Don't let your asthma get you down. Learn how to control it!