

Asthma and the Flu

We all know how bad getting the flu can be. If you have asthma, getting the flu can cause an even bigger problem. You may be asking yourself why? Here are some of the reasons why:

- When you have asthma, your airways are already swollen and irritated.
- When you get sick with the flu, the symptoms of your illness (coughing, sneezing) puts extra stress on your airways.
- This extra stress from having the flu can lead to bigger problems. You may have serious breathing problems or a serious infection such as pneumonia or bronchitis.



What's the flu?

The flu is caused by a virus. It can make you feel sick enough to stay in bed for a week or more. Most flu cases occur during flu season from October to March.

Signs of the Flu:

- Headache
- High fever (101 degrees or higher).
- Feeling very tired with aches and pains, especially in the arms, legs, and back.
- A very bad dry cough
- Runny nose
- Stuffy nose
- Sore throat



How do you catch the flu?

The flu is easily spread from person to person. You can spread it by :

- Sneezing, coughing or touching others.
- Touching something a sick person has touched such as a doorknob, dirty tissues or drinking glasses.



What to Do When You Get the Flu

If you get the flu, the best thing you can do is stay at home and rest. Drink lots of fluids and avoid contact with others. If your asthma symptoms get worse when you have the flu, call your asthma doctor. Your doctor may change your asthma medicine while you are sick.

Ways to Avoid the Flu

- Wash your hands often.
- Use warm water and lots of soap to work up a lather.
- Spend time scrubbing to get all parts of your hands really clean.



Why this Helps

- Hand washing is one of the best ways to avoid getting sick.
- It takes about 20 seconds for the soap and scrubbing to get rid of the germs.

- Try not to touch your nose, eyes and mouth



- This helps keep you from spreading your germs to others. It also helps stop germs from entering your own body.

- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.



- This helps keep your germs from spreading.

- Try to stay away from people who have a cold or the flu.

- This helps you avoid any germs from others who are sick

- Get a flu shot every year.
- Passport covers flu shots at no cost to you.



- Getting the flu shot can be your best protection. It is best to get your flu shot in early fall, before the flu season really gets going.

- Wear a mask.



- Mask wearing protects us from viruses including the flu. It also helps keep your germs from spreading.

Want to learn more?

If you would like to learn more or have any questions, please call us at (800) 578-0603 (TTY: 711). We're here to help you!