

Tips for Cold and Flu Season

Do you want to stay healthy this cold and flu season?
You can by following some of the helpful tips listed here.

Ways to Avoid Getting Sick

- 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.



- Try not to touch your nose, eyes and mouth.



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



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

- Wear a mask.



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



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.

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

- This helps keep your germs from spreading.

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

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

- 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.

Who needs a flu shot?

- Everyone age 6 months and older needs a flu shot every year.
- If you're allergic to eggs or the flu shot, this does not apply to you.

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 or 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, you should:

- Stay at home and rest.
- Drink lots of fluids and eat a healthy, well-balanced diet.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Keep surfaces like keyboards, telephones and doorknobs clean.
- Call your PCP if you have cold or flu symptoms. If you have questions about your health and cannot get in touch with your PCP, call our 24/7 Nurse Advice Line at 1-800-606-9880.
- Don't go to the emergency room for things like sore throats, stomach aches, colds, minor cuts, bruises and sprained muscles. This can save you time and keep you away from other people who may be sick. Remember: A true emergency is when your problem threatens your life or can badly harm your health if you don't get care right away.

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.

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.