



Tips to reduce the risk of seasonal flu

The **single best way to reduce the risk of seasonal flu and its potentially serious complications is to get vaccinated** each year, but preventive actions like avoiding people who are sick, covering your cough and washing your hands also can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like flu. This also can include taking steps for cleaner air and hygiene practices like cleaning frequently touched surfaces.

These tips will help you learn about actions you can take to protect yourself and others from flu and help stop the spread of germs.

1. **Avoid close contact.** Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, too. Putting physical distance between yourself and others can help lower the risk of spreading a respiratory virus.
2. **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you're sick. You can go back to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both are true:
 - a. Your symptoms are getting better overall, **and**
 - b. You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication¹). After these two criteria are met, there are some additional precautions that can be taken to protect others from respiratory illness.
3. **Cover your mouth and nose.** Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Influenza viruses are thought to spread mainly by droplets made

when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. Wearing a mask is an additional prevention strategy that you can choose to do to further protect yourself and others. When worn by a person with an infection, masks reduce the spread of the virus to others. Masks can also protect wearers from breathing in infectious particles from people around them.

4. Clean your hands.

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

- a. Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives Tips on hand washing and using alcohol-based hand sanitizers

5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

6. Take steps for cleaner air.

You can improve air quality by bringing in fresh outside air, purifying indoor air or gathering outdoors. Cleaner air can reduce the risk of exposure to viruses.

7. Practice good hygiene and other healthy habits.

Cleaning frequently touched surfaces, such as countertops, handrails, and doorknobs regularly can help prevent the spread of some illnesses. Also, get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

Get Vaccinated

Seasonal flu vaccines protect against the three influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season. There are several flu vaccine options this flu season. The tips and resources below will help you learn about additional actions you can take to protect yourself and others from flu and help stop the spread of germs.