

## HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INFLUENZA AND A “COLD”

Learn the differences between influenza and the common cold. Call your healthcare provider right away if influenza is suspected in the family to see what treatment is needed.

People sometimes call gastroenteritis the “flu” or “stomach flu.” It is not the same as seasonal influenza, which is a respiratory infection. However children , more commonly than adults, may complain of stomach aches with seasonal influenza. More information about gastroenteritis can be found at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001298/>.

The following chart highlights information from CDC and The Children’s Hospital (Denver, CO) and can help you compare symptoms of the common cold and seasonal influenza.

|                    | Influenza Symptoms           | Cold Symptoms           |
|--------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Onset              | Sudden                       | Gradual                 |
| Fever              | High                         | None to low grade       |
| Fatigue            | Severe                       | Mild                    |
| Cough              | Severe                       | Mild to Moderate        |
| Throat             | Sore                         | May be sore             |
| Headache           | Achy                         | None                    |
| Appetite           | Decreased                    | May be decreased        |
| Muscles            | Achy                         | No aches                |
| Chills             | Yes                          | None                    |
| Stuffy, runny nose | Sometimes                    | Common                  |
| Complications      | Bronchitis/Pneumonia         | Earache/Sinus infection |
| Prevention         | Annual vaccine               | Good hygiene            |
| Treatment          | Antiviral drugs in 24-48 hrs | Symptomatic relief      |

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/ga/coldflu.htm> and <http://thechildrenshospital.org/wellness/topics/flu>

# Seasonal Flu Facts



## 1. What is influenza?

Seasonal influenza, also called the flu, is a contagious viral infection of the nose, throat and lungs. Influenza is a serious illness that leads to approximately 20,000 hospitalizations and nearly 100 deaths in American children younger than 5 years of age each year. Anyone can get influenza, but infection rates are highest among children (~20-30% each year).

## 2. How is influenza spread?

Influenza is spread easily from person to person; when someone who has it sneezes, coughs or even talks, the virus passes into the air and can be breathed in by anyone close by. Sometimes people can become infected by touching something—such as a surface or object—with influenza virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

## 3. What are influenza's symptoms?

Influenza can come on very suddenly and usually includes a high fever with fatigue, aches, chills, headache, cough, sore throat, a runny nose and muscle/joint pain. Children may have additional symptoms such as ear aches, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

## 4. How can individuals prevent getting the influenza?

Annual vaccination is the best way to prevent the influenza. The vaccine is safe and effective, and is given to tens of millions of Americans each year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a three-pronged approach: influenza vaccination, use of antiviral medications for treatment or prevention, and use of other measures to decrease the spread of influenza, including hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette, and staying home from work and school when ill.

## 5. Who should get vaccinated?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommends annual influenza vaccination for all people over the age of 6 months.

## 6. When should individuals get vaccinated?

Seasonal influenza usually circulates during the fall and winter each year in the United States. It's impossible to tell exactly when activity will begin in a given area, so it is important to get immunized as soon as vaccine is available in your community. Getting the influenza vaccine anytime throughout the season continues to be beneficial. The immunity from vaccination continues to be protective throughout the fall and winter.

## 7. How often do individuals need to be vaccinated?

The seasonal influenza vaccine is updated each year to protect against the viruses expected to circulate during the upcoming season. Individuals need to be vaccinated every year because the virus can change. Most people only need one vaccine dose, but children younger than 9 years of age need two doses at least one month apart the first year they are vaccinated.

## 8. Where can individuals get vaccinated?

Parents and caregivers should contact their pediatrician or other health care professional to request the influenza vaccine for their children, themselves and other household contacts. Local hospitals, health clinics, retail stores and even some employers also hold vaccination clinics.