

I N F L U E N Z A

WHAT IS INFLUENZA (FLU)?

Influenza is a contagious disease caused by a virus. It infects the respiratory tract in humans (nose, throat, and lungs). The flu is different from a cold.

HOW IS INFLUENZA SPREAD?

When someone who has influenza coughs, sneezes or talks, the virus is dispersed through the air and may be inhaled by anyone close by.

SYMPTOMS

- Fever (104 F)
- Headache
- Tiredness (can be extreme)
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion
- Body aches
- Lack of appetite
- Runny nose
- Chills and shivering

COLD

vs

FLU

Begin slowly 2-3 days after infection by the virus, normally lasts 2-7 days	Sudden headache and dry cough, may have runny nose and sore throat
A bad cold can last up to 2 weeks	Muscles aches, extremely tired, fever up to 104 degrees
Scratchy, sore throat followed by sneezing and a runny nose. May get mild cough several days later	Most people feel better in a few days, but the tiredness and cough can last for 2 weeks or longer
Adults and older children usually don't have a fever. Infants and young children sometimes run temperatures up to 102 degrees.	Symptoms such as nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting are uncommon with the flu, except in very young children.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Who's at risk?**
 - Persons 50 and older
 - Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
 - Adults and children 6 months and older who have chronic heart or lung conditions, need regular medical care, or weakened immune system
 - Children and teenagers aged 6 months to 18 years who are on long term aspirin therapy
 - Women who will be more than 3 months pregnant during flu season
- **Who should not get the flu shot?**
 - Those who have ever had a severe allergic reaction to eggs or to previous flu shot
 - Those who have a history of Guillian-Barre Syndrome.
- **Why get the flu shot?**
 - An annual flu shot is the best way to reduce the chances of getting the flu.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Department of State Health Services
<http://dshs.state.tx.us>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
<http://www.cdc.gov>