

4 Ways to prevent **Flu**



Seasonal & H1N1 Influenza

What is Influenza (flu)?

Influenza (flu) is an illness caused by a virus. Flu spreads between people through coughing and sneezing, sharing food and drinks, and touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with your hands. It can make you sick for up to one week with mild to severe illness. Flu symptoms often include fever, sore throat, cough, and body aches.

How can I prevent flu illness?

There are four key ways to prevent flu illness and reduce the spread of flu.

1. GET A FLU VACCINE

Flu viruses change from year-to-year, so annual vaccination is recommended. Seasonal flu vaccine protects against three types of flu.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that all children 6 months to 18 years should get a seasonal flu vaccination every year. Children younger than 6 months cannot receive flu vaccine, so their caregivers should be vaccinated. This includes pregnant women, household contacts, and out-of-home caregivers. Seasonal flu vaccine is available now through healthcare providers and local pharmacies.

A new flu virus called novel H1N1 flu (swine flu) is currently spreading throughout the United States and the world. Seasonal flu vaccine does not protect against H1N1 flu, so a new vaccine has been developed. H1N1 flu vaccine will be available later this fall. It will first be given to high-risk populations which include pregnant women, children, and healthcare workers and first responders with direct patient contact. For more additional information on screening criteria, please contact the Greater Monadnock Public Health Network or visit the New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services website.

2. COVER COUGHS & SNEEZES

Cough or sneeze into your inner elbow or shirt sleeve or use a tissue. If you use a tissue, throw it away in the trash and wash your hands right away. Avoid coughing or sneezing directly into your hands – that spreads flu to other people. Also, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

3. WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN

Wash your hands with warm water and soap for 20-30 seconds. Sing “Happy Birthday” or the “ABCs” while you wash. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers also work to clean your hands; however, these sanitizers may not be appropriate for smaller children. In workplaces, schools, and childcare settings routinely clean common surfaces, such as door knobs, tabletops, keyboards, and toys with disinfectants.

4. STAY HOME WHEN SICK

Avoid spreading flu at work, school, and childcare settings by staying at home when you are sick. If you have a fever of 100°F or more and a cough or sore throat, then please stay at home. Drink plenty of fluids, rest, and call your healthcare provider. You may return to work, school, or childcare when you have been without fever – or signs of fever – for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medicine.

Where can I find more information about flu?

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) www.cdc.gov and www.flu.gov

New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services www.dhhs.nh.gov



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