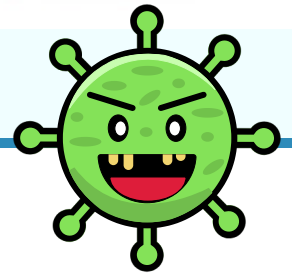


# Get to Know The Flu Virus



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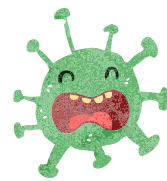
## WHAT IS THE FLU?

**The Flu** is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. The Flu can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to hospitalization or death.

Like all viruses, the influenza virus that causes the flu evolves (mutates) each year. Different strains are sometimes more contagious, and more deadly, than others. Due to this, each year there is variability in how many people catch the flu, and how sick those individuals become.

### Each year in the United States, there are:

- 9 to 41 million Flu cases (people who become ill with the Flu)
- 140,000 – 710,000 hospitalizations
- 12,000 – 52,000 deaths



The more people who catch the flu, the more opportunity the flu virus has to mutate into new strains. This is one of *many* reasons that it is important to get a yearly Flu Shot (a vaccine against influenza). By getting a yearly Flu Shot, you are not only helping to prevent yourself from getting sick, but you are doing your part to help reduce the odds of the Flu Virus becoming worse.

**Every year in the United States between 3% and 11% of people become ill with the flu.**

## Flu Facts:



- The Flu is a viral infection that affects the respiratory system, causing symptoms such as a fever, aching muscles, chills, sweating, headaches, coughing, shortness of breath, feeling tired and weak, having a runny or stuffed up nose, a sore throat, pain in the eyes, and vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults).
- The Flu Virus is **HIGHLY** contagious and is spread through respiratory secretions, such as saliva and mucus, when an infected person talks, coughs or sneezes. These tiny droplets travel through the air and can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. These droplets can also land on hard surfaces, and a person might get the Flu Virus by touching the contaminated surface, before then touching their own mouth, nose or rubbing their eyes.
- The Flu Virus can lead to pneumonia, bronchitis, flare-ups of asthma, heart problems, ear infections, or acute respiratory distress syndrome.
- Treatment for the Flu is mostly supportive. However, for those who are at higher risk of serious illness, influenza antiviral drugs may be a treatment option to speak with your healthcare provider about. These are most effective when started in the first 1-2 days of the illness.
- The Flu is **NOT** the common cold. It is much more severe an illness.

## References

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden/index.html>  
and  
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm>



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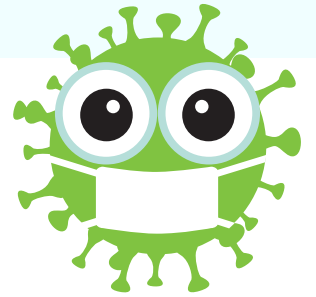
# Get to Know



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## Difference in Symptoms between the Common Cold, the Flu, COVID-19, and R.S.V.

### Which Illness Do You Have?



• RARELY •• SOMETIMES ••• OFTEN

Symptoms	Cold	Flu	Covid-19	R.S.V.
Cough	•••	•••	•••	•••
Difficulty breathing	•	•	•••	••
Fatigue	••	•••	•••	•
Fever	•	•••	••	••
Headaches	••	•••	•••	••
Muscle pain or body aches	••	•••	••	•
New loss of taste or smell*	•	•	••	•
Runny or stuffy nose	•••	••	••	•••
Sneezing	•••	••	••	••
Sore throat	•••	••	•••	•
Vomiting or diarrhea	•	••	••	•
Wheezing	•	•	•	•••

\* A stuffy nose may temporarily decrease the ability to taste or smell but it does not cause a sudden, complete loss of these senses. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



#### Contagious Time Frames

- **Common Cold:** A few days before symptoms appear and for up to 2 weeks after symptoms appear. Contagious until all symptoms are gone.
- **COVID-19:** See CDC guidance at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>
- **Flu:** Most contagious 3-4 days after illness begins, and 1 day before signs of illness show. However, infants and people with weakened immune systems may be contagious for longer than seven days.
- **RSV:** Most contagious 3-8 days after illness begins, and a day or two before signs of illness show. Some infants and people with weakened immune systems may be contagious even after they stop showing symptoms, for as long as 4 weeks.

#### References

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/13/well/covid-flu-rsv-symptoms.html>  
and  
[CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/)



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