

Flu Symptoms

When to Seek Medical Care

This information is provided by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for Veterans, their families, friends, volunteers, and employees. It describes common symptoms of influenza (flu) and how to decide when to stay at home or when to seek medical care.

Common Flu Symptoms

- Fever (100° F or higher)
- Body or muscle aches
- Headache
- Feeling tired or weak
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Stomach symptoms (mostly in children)

If You Have Common Flu Symptoms

- Stay home
- Rest
- Drink fluids
- Take medicines for fever such as acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil® or Motrin®)
- Call your healthcare team within 48 hours for advice about what to do next
 - ▶ Antiviral medicines may reduce flu symptoms if started within 48 hours of your first symptoms

Stop the Spread of Flu

- **Get a flu shot**
- **Stay home when sick**
- **Clean your hands**
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes**



WARNING!

Moderate or severe flu symptoms are signs of complications from flu!

When to Seek Medical Care

Call your healthcare team within 48 hours:

- If you have common flu symptoms or
- If you have moderate flu symptoms:
 - ▶ Not able to drink enough fluids (Dark urine or feeling dizzy when standing are signs that you are not drinking enough fluids)
 - ▶ Fever of 100° F or higher for 3 or more days
 - ▶ Feel better, and then get a fever or sore throat again

Go right away for medical care:

- If you have severe flu symptoms:
 - ▶ Shortness of breath or wheezing
 - ▶ Coughing up blood
 - ▶ Pain or pressure in your chest when breathing
 - ▶ Chest pain, especially if you have heart disease like angina or congestive heart failure
 - ▶ Trouble with balance, walking or sitting up, or becoming confused

Flu vs. Cold: Know the Difference

Symptoms	Flu	Cold
Fever	Usual - 100° F or higher	Rare
Chills	Common	Uncommon
Body or muscle aches	Common – can be severe	Uncommon or mild
Headache	Common – can be severe	Uncommon
Feeling tired and weak	Common – can be severe	Sometimes – usually mild: you don't feel tired
Cough	Common – can last 2-3 weeks	Common – mild to moderate hacking
Sneezing	Sometimes	Common
Runny or stuffy nose	Sometimes	Common
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common
Chest discomfort	Common – can be severe	Sometimes – can be mild to moderate

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Everyone, including the sick person, should clean their hands often and cover their coughs and sneezes.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

www.publichealth.va.gov/flu
www.cdc.gov/flu
www.flu.gov

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
 Office of Public Health (10P3b)
 810 Vermont Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20420
publichealth@va.gov

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www.publichealth.va.gov/InfectionDontPassItOn