

Quick flu facts

It's not a cold

The flu is very different from a cold. Though a cold may linger for a week or two, the symptoms are much less severe. A person can function with a cold, but not with the flu.

Common symptoms

Fatigue
Fever
Muscle ache
Joint pain
Loss of appetite
Headache
Cough
Stuffy nose
Diarrhea/vomiting

Cold

No
No
No
No
No
No
Yes
Yes
No

Flu

Yes
100 –104
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
Yes
No
No

It's not the "stomach flu"

Many people think a stomach bug is the flu. Wrong. A "stomach flu" is an intestinal illness caused by virus, bacteria or food poisoning, and it often disappears after 24-48 hours. It doesn't pack the wallop of the real flu virus, which attacks your lungs and keeps you down and out for much longer.

Questions? Call your doctor or clinic or visit bluecrossmn.com/flustop or email us at flustop@bluecrossmn.com

Flustop is a BluePrint for Health® program.

You have a severe egg allergy. (Eggs are used to make the vaccine.)
You are allergic to thimerosal (used in contact lens solution and other vaccines)
You have had a severe reaction to a flu shot in the past
You have ever had Guillain-Barre syndrome
You have a fever over 100° F at the time of the shot (Wait until you feel better and have no fever.)

Check with your health care provider if you have any of these conditions to learn how to protect yourself from the flu:

BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota
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Nothing stops for the flu - except you.

In fact, once you have the flu, you'll stop for 7 to 10 days, guaranteed. But the coughing, aching and chills won't stop. (And neither will your family or job.)



Can you afford to have the flu?



Not likely. You have a full life, both at work and at home. When you have the flu, you put that life on “hold” for at least a week — probably longer. You could even end up in the hospital. Who handles your life while you get well?

It's nasty

Influenza is a serious illness. It always affects your lungs. It starts suddenly, with a high fever, headache, chills, muscle aches and cough. It lingers for days, even up to two weeks. And it can lead to more serious complications like pneumonia. Millions get the flu every year, and thousands die from it. The flu doesn't kid around.

It's contagious

The flu spreads easily — a sneeze, a cough, a conversation, a goodnight kiss. The small but powerful virus travels in tiny droplets of saliva. Within hours, the germ spreads throughout your body. And because it comes on so fast, you can infect others before you even know you're sick.

Picture this: The guy who works next to you has the flu. He doesn't know it. He coughs, covering his mouth. He takes a break. You take a break a little later. You press the same button on the coffee machine. You rub your nose. Now you could have the flu. And you could take it home with you.

It's preventable

A flu shot is about 80 percent effective in preventing the flu in healthy adults. The inactive viruses in the vaccine help your body build up antibodies against the virus within about two weeks. Because “flu season” happens in the winter, it's best to get your flu shot during October, November or December.

The shot takes about 15 seconds. The most you'll feel is a tender spot on your arm where the shot was given. Flu shots are usually available at your primary care clinic, a work-site clinic or at community locations like public health departments, grocery stores, pharmacies and senior centers.

Who needs it? (The flu shot, that is!)

Anyone who wants to avoid the flu should get a shot every year in the fall.

Some people are especially encouraged to get the flu shot because they're more susceptible to complications of the flu — and the earlier, the better. These include children aged 6 to 23 months; people with lung disease (including asthma), diabetes or heart disease; adults 50 years and older; health care workers; people who provide essential services; and anyone who lives with people in these high-risk groups.

Women who will be pregnant anytime during flu season, especially pregnant women with medical conditions that increase their risk of flu complications, should be vaccinated. Breast-feeding women can get flu shots. Their babies won't be affected by the shot.

Protect yourself, your family, your co-workers and your community. And encourage everyone you know to do the same.

Get the shot. Not the flu.



The shot will keep you out of the doctor's office and the hospital. You have better things to do with your time than lie in bed.

