



Creating Solutions, Changing Lives!

Healthy Lifestyles!

Keeping Germs at Bay During Cold & Flu Season



What is the Flu?

Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is a contagious viral infection that attacks your respiratory system — your nose, throat and lungs. The flu can cause mild to severe illness, and complications can sometimes be deadly.

The “seasonal flu season” in the United States can begin as early as October and last as late as May. During this time, flu viruses are circulating in the population.

Flu viruses are thought to spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. A person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes, or nose.



Signs & Symptoms of the Flu

People who have the flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

** It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever*

Pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections and ear infections are examples of flu-related complications. The flu also can make chronic health problems worse. For example, people with asthma may experience asthma attacks while they have the flu, and people with chronic congestive heart failure may experience a worsening of this condition that is triggered by the flu.

Some children with neurologic conditions may have trouble with muscle function, lung function or difficulty coughing, swallowing, or clearing fluids from their airways. These problems can make flu symptoms worse.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) many children with intellectual disability, cerebral palsy and other disorders are at an increased risk for complications from the flu.

Easter Seals New Jersey
Healthy Lifestyles

DECEMBER

Preventing Germs & Flu

Dates to Remember:

- **April 2014**
5th Annual
Walk With Me & 5K Run

To learn more
about the above, visit
eastersealsnj.org

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U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Recommends the Flu Vaccine!

The CDC recommends an annual seasonal flu vaccine (either the flu shot or the nasal-spray flu vaccine) as the best way to reduce the chances that you will get seasonal flu and spread it to others. When more people get vaccinated against the flu, less flu can spread through that community.

To learn more about the flu vaccine, and find out where to get a flu shot contact your healthcare provider or use the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Flu.gov Flu Vaccine Finder to find a flu clinic near you. www.flu.gov/prevention-vaccination.



Some Natural ways to prevent colds and flu:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or an alcohol based hand rub- especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Don't cover your coughs and sneezes with your hands- use a tissue and dispose of it immediately, or cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Don't touch your face- cold and flu viruses enter through the eyes, nose and mouth.
- Drink lots of fluids- water flushes your system, washing out the toxins as it rehydrates you. A typical, healthy adult needs eight 8-ounce glasses of fluids each day.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- While sick limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- Try to stay home if you are sick until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever, without the use of fever reducing medication.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill.

There is no guarantee against getting colds or the flu, but practicing healthy lifestyle habits can help to keep your immune system strong and improve the function of every part of your body.



Some Healthy Living Strategies:

- Don't smoke.
- Eat a diet high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and low in saturated fat.
- Exercise regularly.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Control your blood pressure.
- If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation.
- Get adequate sleep.

Consult your healthcare provider before starting any new exercise program.

People at higher risk of developing flu complications include:



- **Young children**
- **Older adults**
- **Pregnant women**
- **People with weakened immune systems**
- **People who have chronic illnesses**



Did you know?

According to the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, **42%** of American individuals with disabilities are obese; more than 13% higher than people without disabilities. Accordingly, people with disabilities have greater incidences of chronic illnesses like diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, and other related health complications.

Easter Seals NJ's *Be Well! & Thrive™ Health & Fitness Education Programs* were established to combat these statistics through nutrition and exercise education.

In 2013 alone, 326 program participants have been positively impacted by The *Be Well! & Thrive™ Program's* health and nutrition education classes and/or structured ability-appropriate group exercise classes.

Want to find out how you, your loved one, or your group can get involved?

See how Easter Seals New Jersey is taking steps to address chronic health issues for people with disabilities at eastersealsnj.org/health