

# The Flu

Caring for someone sick at home

## Influenza (the flu) is a serious infection of the nose, throat and lungs

The virus is spread by coughing, sneezing and talking when in close contact with someone who is ill or even 24 hours before symptoms of illness appear.

Symptoms usually start one to four days after exposure to the virus and can last a week or longer.

Annual immunization is recommended to protect against seasonal influenza. Everyone over the age of six months should get their flu vaccine every year.

## Symptoms of the flu

Symptoms of the flu include sudden onset of fever, chills or shakes (sometimes not present in those less than five years of age or older than 65 years of age), cough, sore throat, headache, sore muscles and joints, tiredness, and diarrhea or vomiting, especially in children.



## Preventing the spread of flu

- Stay home until you have been without a fever for 24 hours and are feeling better.
- Get rest and drink fluids.
- Cough into a tissue or sleeve. Discard used tissues immediately.
- Wash hands frequently using soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Don't share anything that goes in your mouth, such as utensils, drinking glasses or toothbrushes.
- Clean frequently touched objects like telephones and remotes often.

## Getting treatment

Influenza can lead to serious complications such as pneumonia. If you are concerned about your symptoms (or someone else's), contact your health care provider or Telehealth Ontario.

Telehealth Ontario is a free, confidential telephone service that you can call to get health advice from a Registered Nurse: 1-866-797-0000.

**See reverse for additional information**



## Southwestern Public Health

**St. Thomas Site**  
1230 Talbot Street,  
St. Thomas N5P 1G9  
519-631-9900

**Woodstock Site**  
410 Buller Street,  
Woodstock N4S 4N2  
519-421-9901

**1-800-922-0096**

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**Public Health**  
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### Is it a cold or the flu?

Symptom	Cold		Flu	
Fever	✗	Rare	✓	Usual, high fever (39°C to 40°C) with sudden onset, lasting three to four days
Headache	✗	Rare	✓	Usual, can be sudden
General aches and pains	~	Generally mild	✓	Usual, often severe
Fatigue (tiredness)	~	Generally mild	✓	Usual, severe, may last 2 to 3 weeks
Runny, stuffy nose	✓	Common	✓	Common
Sneezing	✓	Common	~	Sometimes
Sore throat	✓	Common	✓	Common
Nausea and vomiting	✗	None	✗	Uncommon but can occur, especially in children
Diarrhea	✗	None	✗	Uncommon but can occur, especially in children
Chest discomfort, cough	~	Sometimes, mild	✓	Usual, can be severe to moderate Cough may last for weeks
Complications	✓	Can lead to sinus congestion or earache	✓	Can lead to pneumonia and respiratory failure; worsen a chronic condition, or be life-threatening

### For more information

- Visit Southwestern Public Health website at [www.swpublichealth.ca/flu](http://www.swpublichealth.ca/flu)
- Visit Public Health Agency of Canada website at [www.phac-aspc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.ca) or [www.fightflu.ca](http://www.fightflu.ca)

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