

Kent County Health Department Here's Your "Shot" at Flu Prevention



The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu shot each fall. The following tips can also help reduce your chances of getting sick.

Wash your hands

One of the easiest and most important ways to avoid getting the flu is to wash your hands properly and often.

How to wash your hands

1. Use warm water and liquid soap.
2. Lather all parts of the hands and rub briskly for 20 seconds. Be sure to include:
 - the backs of your hands
 - between your fingers
 - wrists
3. Use a brush or nail file to clean under your fingernails.
4. Rinse well under warm running water.
5. Dry hands with a paper towel or air dryer. Don't use a cloth towel.
6. Turn off the water using the paper towel instead of your clean hands.

When should you wash your hands?

Always wash your hands **BEFORE** you:

- Touch or serve food
- Eat or drink
- Set the table
- Put in or take out contact lenses
- Treat a cut, scrape, burn or blister
- Take care of someone who is sick
- Take medication

Always wash your hands **AFTER** you:

- Go to the bathroom

- Help someone else use the bathroom
- Change a diaper (don't forget to wash the baby's hands too!)
- Cough, sneeze, blow your nose or wipe a child's nose
- Shake someone's hand
- Visit someone who is sick
- Take care of someone who is sick or injured
- Eat
- Handle garbage
- Touch an animal or clean up animal waste
- Use public transportation

Avoid close contact

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

Stay home when you are sick

If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

Cover your mouth and nose

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.

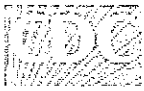
OR

Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.

Put your used tissue in the waste basket. Wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.



Information for Schools

Questions & Answers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognizes that school administrators, teachers, staff, and parents are concerned about the flu, particularly its effects on children. Schools are instrumental in keeping their communities healthy by taking actions such as posting information about hand hygiene in restrooms, providing flu prevention messages in daily announcements, and being vigilant about cleaning and disinfecting classroom materials.

The following are some answers to questions commonly asked by school administrators, teachers, staff, and parents:

General Information about the Disease

What is influenza (flu)?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu **vaccination** each year.

Every year in the United States, on average:

- 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu;
- more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications;
- 20,000 of those hospitalized are children younger than 5 years of age; and
- about 36,000 people die from flu.

Some people, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), are at high risk for serious flu complications.

How does the flu spread?

Flu viruses spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day **before** symptoms develop and up to 5 days **after** becoming sick. **That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.**

What are the symptoms of the flu?

Symptoms of flu include:

- fever (usually high)
- headache
- extreme tiredness
- dry cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle aches

Stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, also can occur but are more common in children than adults