



HS04-066C (8-07)

Flu/Influenza

A 5-Minute Safety Training Aid

Remember to wash your hands!

The flu (influenza) is a contagious disease that is caused by the influenza virus.

It attacks the respiratory tract in humans (nose, throat, and lungs). The flu is contagious. A person can spread the flu starting one day before they feel sick. Adults can continue to pass the flu virus to others for another 3-7 days after symptoms start. Children can pass the virus for longer than 7 days. Symptoms start 1-4 days after the virus enters the body. Some persons can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, those persons can still spread the virus to others. The flu is different from a cold and it usually comes on suddenly and can include the following flu symptoms:

- fever;
- headache;
- tiredness (can be extreme);
- dry cough;
- nasal congestion; and
- body aches.

Remember to wash your hands before, during, and after food preparation

Since a virus causes influenza, antibiotics (like penicillin) don't work to cure it. In fact, reckless use of antibiotics can have a detrimental impact on the individual's health and the health of the population because they promote the growth of antibiotic resistant organisms. There are several actions a person can take to prevent exposure to the flu virus.

- Practice good hygiene by washing your hands frequently.
- Cover the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Get seven to eight hours of sleep each night.
- Get good nutrition and be sure to eat five fruits and vegetables each day.
- Exercise regularly.
- Don't go to work when a fever or any other of the flu symptoms are present.
- Make sure that everyone in the family has their own toothbrush, toothpaste and cup.
- Avoid shaking hands with other people.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizing gel to reduce risk of exposure after touching door handles, shopping cart



handles, rest room facilities, and other places where there is lots of public contact with surfaces.

- Use natural remedies like a multiple vitamin, vitamin C, and zinc to boost the immune system.
- Avoid using alcohol and tobacco.
- Take available medications to treat the flu.

Do not give aspirin to a child or teenager who has the flu. They may develop Reye's syndrome!

Remember to wash your hands before you eat and after you use the bathroom

A person suffering from the flu can take the following steps to relieve the symptoms:

- Stay at home, it is not noble to go to work and share the flu with others.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take ibuprofen or acetaminophen to keep the fever down.
- Limit contact with other people.

Remember to wash your hands after handling animals

Many people use the term "stomach flu" to describe illnesses with nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea that are not caused by the flu virus, but can be caused by many different viruses, bacteria, or even parasites. While vomiting, diarrhea and being sick to the stomach, can sometimes be related to the flu, particularly in children, these are rarely the main symptoms of influenza. The flu is a respiratory disease, not a stomach or intestinal disease. A doctor can perform tests on a person in the first few days of illness to see if they have the flu.

Remember to wash your hands, especially if they are dirty

Practice preventive measures to stay healthy, especially during the flu season, stick to a healthy diet, limit your intake of alcohol and sugar, get regular exercise (even just walking around the block), sleep for 7-8 hours each night, and keep a positive attitude.

Remember to wash your hands!

This Take 5 was published with information from the Centers for Disease Control, the The Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation, and is considered factual at the time of development.

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