

# Seasonal Illness Snapshot

## An Overview of Common Winter Illnesses

### Influenza (Flu)

- Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs.
- It can cause mild to severe illness.
- Symptoms usually come on suddenly, but not everyone has symptoms.
- The best way to prevent flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year.

### Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

- RSV is a common respiratory virus that infects the nose, throat, and lungs.
- RSV usually causes mild symptoms.
- Infants and older adults are more likely to develop severe RSV.
- CDC recommends immunizations to protect infants, some young children, and older adults.

### Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

- COVID-19 most often causes symptoms that can feel like the flu.
- However, other parts of your body may also be affected by the disease.
- Symptoms are usually mild, but some people become severely ill.
- The best way to prevent COVID-19 is by getting a yearly vaccine.

### Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

- Whooping cough is a respiratory illness caused by a type of bacteria.
- The bacteria release toxins, which damage the cilia (tiny, hair-like extensions that line part of the upper respiratory system).
- To prevent serious illness, CDC recommends vaccination.

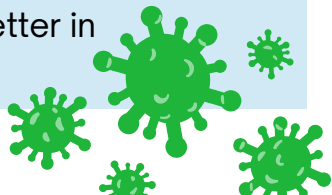
### Norovirus (Stomach Bug)

- Norovirus is a very contagious virus that causes vomiting and diarrhea.
- It is often called the "stomach flu" or the "stomach bug." However, norovirus is not related to the flu.
- Norovirus causes inflammation of the stomach or intestines.
- Most people get better in 1 to 3 days.

### Pneumonia

- Pneumonia is an infection that inflames the air sacs in the lungs.
- The air sacs may fill with fluid or pus, causing a cough with phlegm.
- Bacteria, viruses, and fungi can all cause pneumonia.
- It ranges from mild to life-threatening.
- It is most serious for infants and young children, people older than age 65, and people with weak immune systems.

*Did you know?*



Hand sanitizer doesn't work well against norovirus.  
Always wash your hands with soap and water!

# Seasonal Illness Snapshot

## Tips to Get and Stay Healthy this Winter

### Preventing Illness

Prevention strategies are important steps you can take to protect yourself and others from illness.

- Stay up to date with immunizations.
- Practice good hygiene.
  - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
  - Use proper handwashing technique.
  - Clean frequently touched surfaces, such as countertops, handrails, and doorknobs regularly.
- Take steps for cleaner air.
- When you are sick:
  - Use precautions to prevent spread.
  - Seek health care promptly if you have risk factors for severe illness. Treatment may help lower your risk of severe illness.

### Staying Home

If you are sick, stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick). You can go back to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both are true:

- Your symptoms are getting better overall, and
- You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).

### Managing Symptoms

Most people with mild illness can manage their symptoms at home.

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Use a clean humidifier or vaporizer.
- Use saline nasal spray or drops.
- Breathe in steam from a bowl of hot water or shower.
- Use throat lozenges or cough drops for adults and children over the age of 4.
- Use honey to relieve cough for adults and children over the age of 1.
- Ask your doctor about over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, such as pain relievers and fever reducers.

### Seeking Care

Seek medical care if you or your child has:

- Trouble breathing or fast breathing,
- Dehydration,
- Fever that lasts longer than 4 days,
- Symptoms that last more than 10 days without getting better,
- Symptoms that improve then return, or
- Worsening chronic medical conditions.

If you or your child are at higher risk of severe illness, contact your doctor right away even if the illness is mild. You may be eligible for antiviral treatments that work best if started soon after symptoms begin.

*Did you know?*



Antibiotics don't work against viruses. If you don't need antibiotics, you shouldn't take them.