

THE FLU

- 1.) You CAN get the flu even if you received the flu vaccine. Especially since this year's shot has NOT been as effective as they had hoped. (Even though because you are vaccinated, your symptoms might be less severe, you should still be vaccinated. It is not too late.)
- 2.) You have a virus with a course of 7-14 days during which you are going to feel VERY poorly; you may/will have fever, chills, severe headache, sore throat, chest congestion, nasal congestion, coughing, sneezing, severe weakness/lethargy, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea and severe body/joint aches. Viruses AREN'T treated with antibiotics; it has to run its course.
- 3.) You may go to your primary care doctor, urgent care, or telephone triage nurse FIRST, but know there is little they can do to help you. The only thing they can help you with is medication for severe coughing unresponsive to over the counter medications or severe diarrhea/vomiting. You do not need antibiotics unless you develop a secondary lung infection.
- 4.) DON'T GO TO THE ER...UNLESS you have shortness of breath, you cannot keep down fluids for 24 hours, have persistent liquid stools accompanied by dizziness, fast heart rate or low blood pressure.
- 5.) Tamiflu is an antiviral drug that might be prescribed based on your provider's judgement.
- 6.) DO take Tylenol AND Advil/Motrin/Aleve at MAX doses (unless contraindicated by other health issues) to alleviate fever, headache and body aches.
- 7.) DO take over-the-counter flu remedies. Be careful taking combinations of different medications to avoid overdosing and over treating (for example, some flu medicines already have Tylenol (Acetaminophen) in them, read the bottle.
- 8.) Use home remedies such as hot showers, vapor rubs, vapor humidifiers, essential oils, etc.
- 9.) Drink TONS of fluids! Hot liquids and soups may be helpful. Try to maintain nutritious intake. Milk products may thicken mucus and worsen coughs.
- 10.) IMPORTANT: A rule of thumb about coughing!...If it's productive (coughing up sputum), DO NOT suppress it with meds. If it's non-productive (dry and annoying), DO suppress it. Make sure you're properly hydrated, especially with a productive cough (it thins secretions and makes them easier to cough up and out). Elevate your head when you sleep to decrease coughing/secretions.
- 11.) PLAN AHEAD--stock up now on necessary medications, juices and drinks, soups, popsicles, and broth so you'll be ready. This time of year, it is not unusual to find store shelves empty. You won't want to go shopping when you or a loved one is sick.
- 12.) DO NOT GO OUT IN PUBLIC!! An older person or someone in poor health or with respiratory disease can die from the flu you pass on to them! Do NOT send a child with a fever to school during flu season.
- 13.) WASH YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER!!

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2017-2018.htm>