



What is the flu?

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory disease caused by a virus that can lead to serious complications, hospitalization, or death. Each year, approximately 36,000 Americans die and over 200,000 are hospitalized from flu-related illnesses. Those at most risk are older adults, young children, pregnant women and those with chronic medical conditions. The flu is spread by coughing, sneezing and close contact. In Ohio, flu season normally peaks in January or later. Symptoms include some or all of the following:

- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Fever (not everyone will have a fever)
- Sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

How to prevent the flu.

- Everyone six months of age and older should to get a flu shot every year. This is the single best way to protect against the flu. Franklin County Public Health offers flu shots at community clinics held every month.
To schedule an appointment, call (614) 525-3719 or visit www.myfcph.org.
- Washing your hands frequently will also reduce your chances of getting the flu. Use soap and water and scrub for at least 20 seconds, which is about how long it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice.
- Avoid touching your face, nose, mouth and eyes. These are common ways for germs to pass from your hands and into your body.
- Cover your nose and mouth with your sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing to stop the spread your germs to others. Flu shots are also available at most doctor offices and local retail pharmacies.

What if I get sick?

If you think you have the flu, stay home to keep your friends and coworkers safe. Also, avoid close contact with family members at home, so you don't get them sick. Cover your coughs and sneezes with your sleeve or a tissue. Get plenty of rest, and drink a lot of liquids.

