

# Know what to do about the flu.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) urges you to “**Take 3” Actions To Fight The Flu** and protect yourself and others from influenza (the flu).

Flu season will be here soon and the *CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease.*

The [2010-2011 flu vaccine](#) will protect against three different flu viruses: an H3N2 virus, an influenza B virus and the H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last season.

## 1. Take time to get a flu vaccine.

Getting the flu vaccine soon after it becomes available each year is always a good idea, and the protection you get from vaccination will last throughout the flu season.

People over the age of 50 are one of several groups recommended for a seasonal flu shot. Caregivers of seniors also fall under these general flu shot recommendations due to the possibility of spreading the virus to the individuals they care for.

- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated against the flu as soon as the 2010-2011 season vaccine is available.
- Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. People who care for them should be vaccinated instead.
- High risk groups include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older.
- Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.
- Vaccination also is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or

care for high risk people to keep from spreading flu to high risk people.

## 2. Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs.

### 1. 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.

### 2. Stay home when you are sick.

People who are sick with flu-like illness should stay home and keep away from others as much as possible; including avoiding travel, for at least 24 hours after fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. *Fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.*

### 3. Cover your mouth and nose.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or the crook of the elbow or the sleeve when coughing or sneezing.

### 4. Clean your hands.

Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand cleaner when soap and water are not available.

### 5. 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.

### 6. Practice other good health habits.

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

### 3. Take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor prescribes them.

- If you get the flu, antiviral drugs can treat your illness.
- Antiviral drugs are different from antibiotics. They are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) and are not available over-the-counter.
- Antiviral drugs can make illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications.
- It's very important that antiviral drugs be used early (within the first 2 days of symptoms) to treat people who are very sick (such as those who are hospitalized) or people who are sick with flu symptoms and who are at increased risk of severe flu illness, such as pregnant women, young children, people 65 and older and people with certain chronic health conditions.
- Flu-like symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea. People may be infected with the flu, and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.

### **STAY INFORMED**

Listen to local and national radio, watch news reports on television, and read your newspaper, as well as, other sources of printed and Web-based information. Talk to your local health care providers and public health officials.

- **Franklin County Board of Health**  
(614) 462-3160  
[www.franklincountyohio.gov/health](http://www.franklincountyohio.gov/health)
- **Columbus Public Health** (614) 645-7417;  
[www.publichealth.columbus.gov](http://www.publichealth.columbus.gov)
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
1-800-CDC-INFO  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- **Ohio Information line**, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m., Monday – Friday, 1-866-800-1404

- **Central Ohio Community Flu Hotline**  
211  
Call 211 or (614) 221-2255 for general flu questions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Visit [www.vaccine4me.com](http://www.vaccine4me.com) or call (614) 437-2900
- Visit: [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)

### **PLAN AND PREPARE**

Store a two week supply of water and non-perishable food. If you are ill and cannot get to a store, it will be important for you to have extra supplies on hand. This can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and snow storms.

### **Be sure to get your pneumonia vaccination.**

Consider getting the pneumonia vaccine as well since pneumonia is a frequent complication of flu. While these do not protect you from H1N1, it will keep you healthy and fight off seasonal flu.

### **SUBSCRIBE TO A MAIL ORDER OR HOME DELIVERY PRESCRIPTION DRUG SERVICE**

Having your needed medications at home, will reduce your need to go to a pharmacy where contact could be made with flu-infected persons. Contact your pharmacy **today** and find out if they have a free home-delivery or mail order service. If this option is available, consider subscribing or enrolling **now** to ensure a continuous supply in your home.

Many offer options to receive up to 90 days of medication delivered postage free to your door. Check with your pharmacy or drug plan to see if this option is available. **Act now** before your prescriptions need to be refilled to ensure any processing delays will not leave you without a continuous supply.