



Gila County  
Health & Emergency Management

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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## Influenza (Flu) Fact Sheet

### Background

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccination each year.

### Symptoms

The most common symptoms of the flu are:

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Extreme tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches
- Stomach symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea can occur, but are more common in children

### Transmission

Flu viruses spread mainly from person to person by the droplets produced when infected people cough, sneeze or talk. People may become infected by touching an object (such as a door knob) with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. People with the flu may be contagious 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick.

### Treatment

Most persons with the flu will recover within 1 to 2 weeks without seeking medical treatment. Persons with the flu should get plenty of rest and drink plenty of non-caffeinated fluids. Tylenol and ibuprofen may be helpful to relieve fever and pain. In some cases, intravenous fluids or hospitalization may be necessary.

Persons with heart or lung problems, weakened immune systems, the elderly, or infants are at higher risk for complications from the flu. For these patients, their doctor may prescribe antiviral medication. In order to be effective, antiviral medication must be started within 48 hours after symptoms begin.

### Prevention

- Wash your hands often
- Stay home when you are sick
- If you are sick, avoid close contact with others, especially when coughing or sneezing
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- If you have a flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever goes away
- Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine every year



### For more information

If you need more information, please contact your primary care physician or Gila County Division of Health & Emergency Management at (928) 402-8811.