

# Influenza Symptoms and Severity

## Symptoms

The flu is different from a cold and tends to come on suddenly. People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Feeling feverish, fever\* or high fever (up to 104 degrees Fahrenheit or 40 degrees Celsius)
- Chills (sometimes shaking)
- Cough (sometimes dry and unproductive)
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Malaise
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

**\* It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.**

## Complications

It is important to treat the symptoms of the flu to decrease and relieve the ill effects and the discomfort of the disease.

Fevers from the flu may last up to two to five days and can be treated with anti-pyretic or fever reducing agents.

Most people who get influenza will recover in a few days to less than 2 weeks, although cough and malaise can persist for longer, but some people will develop complications (such as pneumonia), some of which can be life-threatening and result in death.

Bacterial pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus and ear infections are four examples of complications from flu.

**\* Influenza can make chronic health problems worse.**

## Severity

Flu is unpredictable and its severity in the population can vary widely from one season to the next depending on many things that include the following:

- What flu viruses are spreading
- How much flu vaccine is available
- When the vaccine is available
- How many people get vaccinated
- How well the flu vaccine is matched to flu viruses that are causing illness

**For more information, visit:**

**<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/symptoms.htm>**