

Why is Seasonal Influenza a Health Emergency?

Every year approximately 36,000 people die from the flu in the United States.

Influenza viruses change often, so it is necessary to change the composition of flu vaccine each year.

A pandemic flu situation can occur when a new subtype of virus infects a large part of the population.

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Seasonal Influenza (Flu): Know the Facts

What is flu?

The flu is caused by a virus and affects the body's breathing system, including the nose, throat, and lungs. Each year, about 114,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized with the flu and about 36,000 people die from complications of the flu.

What are the symptoms of flu?

The most common symptoms of flu are fever, cough, and sore throat. Symptoms can also include body aches, headache, chills, runny nose, and fatigue.

Who is at greatest risk of getting the flu?

Everyone is at risk for getting the flu, but some populations have a higher risk of

getting the flu. These populations include seniors (age 65 and older), young children (especially children 2 years of age and younger), and people with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, cancer, arthritis, and HIV/AIDS.

How does flu spread?

The flu virus is spread by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze, or talk. These droplets can land in the mouth and nose of people who are nearby. Sometimes the droplets can be found on surfaces. If a person touches a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touches their own mouth, eyes, or nose they can contract the flu virus.

How long can I spread the flu virus?

A person can spread the flu to someone else before they even know they are sick as well as while they are sick. Most healthy adults may infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick.

What should I do if I have the flu?

People sick with flu should make sure to drink plenty of fluids, get plenty of rest, eat healthy foods, and remember the 3 C's: Cover your coughs and sneezes, Clean hands often, and Contain your illness; stay home to avoid spreading the flu.

FLU SHOT....Your best line of defense!



The single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get a flu shot each year. Flu season can begin as early as October and can last as late as May. Seasonal flu activity usually peaks in January and February. It is important to get your flu shot as soon as it is available each year.

It is recommended that everyone 6 months of age and older get a flu shot. It is especially important to get the flu shot if someone you live with or care for is at a high risk of complications from the flu.



Need more information?

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/flu/
- The Portage County Health Department at www.co.portage.oh.us/health_department.htm

Ready to get your flu shot?

Check with your primary physician, pharmacist, or local health department to get a flu shot.

The Portage County Health Department has open Flu Shot Clinics every Wednesday from 8:00 am - 12 noon. Clinic is located at 449 South Meridian Street, Ravenna. Call 330-298-4490 with questions.

Is it a Cold or the Flu?

A common cold and the flu are both respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. It is often hard to tell which is which because they have many of the same symptoms. However, the flu can be more serious because it can result in health problems like pneumonia or bacterial infections.

SYMPTOM	COLD	FLU
Fever	Rare	Usual
Headache	Rare	Sudden onset and can be severe
Muscle ache	Mild	Usual and often severe
Aches and pains	Mild	Can last 2 or more weeks
Extreme exhaustion	Never	Sudden onset and can be severe
Runny nose	Often	Sometimes
Sneezing	Often	Sometimes
Sore throat	Often	Sometimes
Cough	Mild hacking cough	Usual and can be severe
Duration	3-4 days	6-7 days

Fight the Flu



Portage Prepares is a county education program for preparing Portage County communities to meet the challenges of emergencies and/or disasters in order to be safe and reduce injury. Portage Prepares is a program of the Portage County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and its Advisory Committee under the guidance of the Portage County Board of Commissioners. For additional information on emergency preparedness, go to www.co.portage.oh.us/portageprep/.