



# Protect yourself from the flu!



**Did you get your flu shot yet?** We want to remind you that influenza (flu) season is from September through March. It is important that you are protected from the flu. It is important that you and your family receive the flu shot once a year from September to March. Your doctor's office or local pharmacy may provide flu shots.

It is especially important that the children in your family get the flu shot. Children are twice as likely to get sick with the flu and can spread infections to others such as parents, grandparents, teachers, classmates and other family members. Protecting the children helps to protect the whole family.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the seasonal flu shot for:

- Adults 50 years of age or older
- Residents of nursing homes or other chronic care facilities.
- People with a weakened immune system or living with ongoing illness, such as diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, COPD, or asthma.
- Individuals living with or caring for persons 6 months to 18 years, 50 years or older, or individual at higher risk for severe flu complications.
- Children 6 months to 18 years
- Women who are pregnant or may become pregnant.
- Healthy adults 19 to 49 years (optional).

**How do I know if I have Influenza?** Influenza is a virus that can cause specific symptoms which include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Muscle pain or soreness
- Feeling weak or feeling tired

The flu starts to go away within 3-7 days, but cough, feeling weak, or feeling tired can last longer. If you have any of these symptoms, make an appointment to see your doctor. Only your doctor can determine if you have influenza (the flu). If your doctor determines you have the flu, your doctor may prescribe antiviral medication to reduce the number of days you feel sick. You may get a cold even if you get the flu vaccine; a cold and the flu are caused by different germs. Remember to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze.

## Stay healthy and Influenza Free!

1. **Wash your hands often.** Washing your hands often with soap and water helps to reduce the spread of germs. Wash your hands before and after preparing food, before eating, after using the restroom, or whenever your hands are dirty.
2. **Get the flu shot once a year.** Check with your doctor to make sure you are current on all your adult immunizations. Remind others to get the flu vaccine.
3. **Kindly ask others to not visit you, if either you or they are sick or might be getting sick.** Older adults and those with a weak immune system have a greater risk of getting sick and can die from influenza (flu) complications. Their bodies may not be able to fight the illness as well as healthier individuals.
4. **Eat healthy foods.**
5. **Get 6-8 hours of sleep a night.**
6. **Exercise regularly.**

**AWARE Project:** The California Medical Association Foundation initiated the Alliance Working for Antibiotic Resistance Education (AWARE) in 2000 to increase consumer awareness of appropriate antibiotic use and reduce inappropriate prescribing. AWARE has an initiative on cold and flu prevention and management.

For more information, please contact the AWARE Project at 916.779.6620 or via e-mail at [aware@thecmafoundation.org](mailto:aware@thecmafoundation.org). Visit [www.aware.md](http://www.aware.md) for more influenza materials and resources.