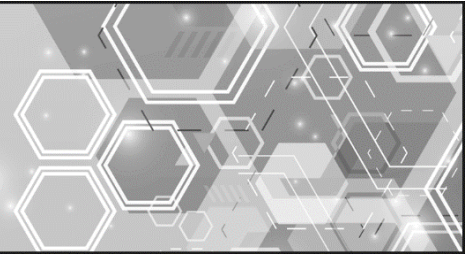




Durham Region Health Department **Facts about...**



Influenza (Flu)

What is it?

- Influenza (flu) is a respiratory illness caused by the Influenza A and B viruses. It can spread from person to person and affects your nose, throat, and lungs.
- Most people who get the flu recover within 7-10 days, but some can become very ill and need medical attention resulting in hospitalization or death.
- Together, flu and pneumonia are one of the top 10 leading causes of death in Canada.
- People at greatest risk of flu-related problem are:
 - Adults and children with long-term health conditions
 - Pregnant people
 - Indigenous peoples
 - Children 6 months to 4 years of age and people 65 years and older
 - People who live and work in long-term care homes and other similar settings
 - Members of underserved communities
 - Healthcare workers or first responders
 - People working closely with birds or mammals

What are common symptoms of the flu?

- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Stuffy nose and/or sneezing
- Sore throat
- Chest discomfort and/or coughing
- Muscles aches and pain
- Extreme weakness and tiredness
- Nausea/vomiting
- Diarrhea, especially in children

... over

905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | durham.ca/health

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



How is it spread?

- The flu spreads mostly through coughing and sneezing. It can also be spread by touching a surface that has the flu virus and then touching your mouth, eyes, or nose.
- A person can spread the flu virus from one day before symptoms start and up to 5 days after becoming sick. Children and people with weakened immune systems may spread the virus for a longer time.

How to protect yourself and others from the flu

- Get your flu vaccine as soon as possible each year. It's the best way to prevent getting and spreading the flu. For more information, see [Facts About... Influenza Vaccines](#).
- Clean your hands often using soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue (and throw out) or your upper sleeve.
- Keep common surfaces and items clean and disinfected.
- Stay home if you are sick.

How is it treated?

- You can treat most symptoms at home:
 - Stay home and get plenty of rest
 - Drink lots of fluids
 - Treat muscle pain using a hot water bottle or heating pad; apply heat for short periods of time
 - Use spray or saline nose drops to treat a stuffy nose
 - Avoid alcohol, caffeine, tobacco, and second-hand smoke
 - Speak to your doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist about over-the-counter medications that can help you feel better (such as basic pain or fever relievers)
- See a doctor if your symptoms do not get better in a few days or if they get worse

September 17, 2025