

# Flu Symptoms & Severity

## Influenza Symptoms

Influenza (also known as the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The flu is different from a cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly. People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever\* or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- 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.*

## Flu Complications

Most people who get influenza will recover in a few days to less than two weeks, but some people will develop complications (such as pneumonia) as a result of the flu, some of which can be life-threatening and result in death.

Pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus and ear infections are examples of complications from flu. The flu can make chronic health problems worse. For example, people with asthma may experience asthma attacks while they have the flu, and people with chronic congestive heart failure may experience worsening of this condition that is triggered by the flu.

## People at High Risk from Flu

Anyone can get the flu (even healthy people), and serious problems related to the flu can happen at any age, this includes people 65 years and older, people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), pregnant women, and young children.

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