

Peak Season for the Flu



Influenza or “The Flu” is a serious contagious disease that can lead to hospitalization and even death. Every year the influenza virus, affects hundreds of thousands of people costing countless hours of productivity.

During peak season, which falls between late December and March, flu cases increase roughly tenfold or more. Despite a higher prevalence of cases during the peak season, these viruses are transmitted all year round. Each flu season is normally associated with a major influenza subtype or strain. Influenza strains change each year, causing the overall impact of the strain to be unpredictable. Educating yourself about flu treatment and prevention options can better prepare you to face the flu season. You’ll want to act now to make sure you and your coworkers stay healthy.

The best way to prevent or lessen the severity of the flu is to get vaccinated each year. Although most vaccinations are administered in late fall, it is never too late to get vaccinated

Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.* This is especially important after you go out in public and do things such as:
 - o Touch shopping carts
 - o Touch staircase hand rails
 - o Shake hands
 - o Utilize common areas or items such as restrooms or hand tools.
- Wash your hands or utilize hand sanitizer before and after eating or smoking.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.

Flu symptoms can be mild or severe. If the symptoms are mild they can become severe without much notice. Be aware of your body and monitor your body temperature. Unlike a cold, which can come on gradually, the flu usually arrives suddenly with a fever as high as 104° F, plus chills, aches and weakness.

The common symptoms of the flu include:

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Chills
- Extreme fatigue
- Dry cough
- Runny nose may also occur but is more common in children than adults
- Stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, may also occur but are more common in children than adults.

If you have flu symptoms, you should avoid exposing your coworkers. No workplace can make itself entirely immune from the flu. But with some simple steps, you can do a lot to keep everyone healthier and happier during the flu season.