



GET READY FOR FLU SEASON

It's almost that dreaded time of the year – flu season. The flu virus causes thousands of hospitalizations and deaths each year. There are some measures you can take to reduce your risk of catching the virus and spare yourself from the symptoms that come along with it.

Prevention, prevention, prevention

It's a no-brainer – get the flu vaccine. An annual flu vaccination is the best way to protect yourself, and others, from catching and spreading the virus. A vaccine is recommended for anyone six months of age and older, including pregnant women. It's also recommended that anyone with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, heart and lung problems, neurological conditions, cancer, metabolic diseases, blood conditions, kidney or liver disease, receive a vaccine.

And, it's a myth you can get the flu from the shot. Some people may experience minor side effects that mimic the flu including aches and a low-grade fever but that only lasts a day or so.

Practice healthy hygiene habits

Washing your hands many times a day is another way to stop the spread of the flu and keep the virus at bay. Wash your hands with soap and water while singing 'Happy Birthday' twice to make sure your scrubbed long enough.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue each time you sneeze and cough – and, wash afterwards. If a sink isn't close by, use a gel sanitizer or an alcohol-based hand wipe to clean your hands.

Also, it's important to wash anything that germs might have touched – germs can live on any surface for hours. If someone in your household, work or school is infected, be sure to scrub desks, phones, door knobs, tables, toys and even books.

Stay home

If you're unlucky this flu season and catch the virus, stay home. Anti-flu medication prescribed by your doctor can help if taken within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms. Avoid going to school or work at least 24 hours after your fever breaks. Rest is an important part of getting over an illness.

Take it easy – read that book that's been on your list or binge-watch a new show – just don't go out unless you need to leave the house for medical reasons.