

# The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

[www.TheAllergyClinic.com](http://www.TheAllergyClinic.com)

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Newsletter

[www.theallergyclinic.com](http://www.theallergyclinic.com) October 2024



Young children, the elderly and people with compromised immune systems may be contagious for longer periods of time. For many, symptoms typically begin about 2-4 days after the flu infects a person's respiratory tract. To further complicate things, some people can be infected with the flu, show no symptoms, and yet still spread the virus.

### People at Higher Risk for Flu Complications

- Adults 65 years and older
- Adults with Asthma, Heart Disease
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Kidney Disease
- Women who are pregnant

If you or a loved one does get sick with the flu, stay home from work or school. Call your primary care physician, as some may benefit from an anti-viral. However, these medications work best when started early, ideally no later than two days after your flu symptoms begin. If started early enough, an anti-viral can reduce the severity of symptoms and shorten the duration of your illness. By the way, antibiotics are usually ineffective in treating the flu, as antibiotics are usually indicated for the treatment of bacterial infections.

**Additional Tips:** Rest, drink lots of fluids and get a good night's sleep. While sick, stay away from others as much as possible to keep from infecting them. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Wash your hands. Wear a mask to help reduce the spread of this virus. Clean frequently touched surfaces, such as countertops, handrails, and doorknobs regularly.

We at the Allergy and Asthma Clinic also recommend that you keep up with your prescribed medications, and if you are on them, immunotherapy. Maximizing control of your allergies and asthma can help reduce the impact of a respiratory illness, such as the flu. As always, we are here to help!

### Preparing for the Upcoming Flu Season

The fall usually brings cooler temperatures, leading to more time indoors. Unfortunately, this time of the year also signals the beginning of flu season. Although the exact timing and duration of the flu season is difficult to predict, flu activity often begins to increase in October, peaking between December and February. According to the CDC, the timing and duration of flu activity has been less predictable ever since the COVID pandemic. Now is the time to discuss getting the flu shot with your medical provider, as well as if you should update other vaccinations.

### How the Flu Spreads

People with the flu can spread it to others, usually by way of droplets resulting from coughing, sneezing or even talking. These droplets can then be inhaled by someone close by. The COVID pandemic taught us physical distancing and during the cold and flu season, this isn't a bad concept to revisit.

### When Are People with Flu Contagious?

Flu viruses can be detected in most infected individuals beginning one day **before** symptoms develop and up to five to seven days **after** becoming sick. People with flu are most contagious during the first 3 days of their illness.