

You can get further advice and information by:

- Asking your Doctor or Healthcare Professional

Other sources of information about health and health care:

- **Public Health England** works with national and local government, industry and the NHS to protect and improve the nation's health and support healthier choices.

Website: www.gov.uk/phe

- **NHS Choices** is the online 'front door' to the NHS. It is the country's biggest health website and gives all the information you need to make choices about your health.

Website: www.nhs.uk

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Infection Prevention and Control

Influenza Seasonal Flu

Information Leaflet



Seasonal flu (also known as influenza) is an infectious illness caused by a flu virus

How can I catch it?

The virus is contagious and can be spread between people.

Transmission is by:

- Coughing and Sneezing
- Touching or shaking the hand of an infected person and then touching your mouth, eyes or nose
- Touching surfaces or objects that have become contaminated with the flu virus and then touching your mouth, eyes or nose without first cleaning your hands

What are the symptoms of seasonal flu?

The main symptoms are:

- High temperature (above 38°C)
- Cough
- Joint or muscle pains
- Sore throat
- Runny nose

In addition other symptoms may include:

- Headache
- Fatigue/unusual tiredness
- Vomiting or diarrhoea

NB if you do not have a temperature it is very unlikely that you have the flu.

Am I infectious if I don't have symptoms?

No. If you do not have symptoms of seasonal flu you are not infectious.

How long will I be infectious to others?

People are the most infectious soon after they develop symptoms. They can continue to spread the virus, for example in coughs and sneezes for up to five days (seven days in children). People become less infectious as their symptoms subside and once symptoms have gone they are considered to be no longer infectious.

What can I do to protect against infection?

If you are in the at-risk group have the flu vaccination. It is free of charge to those in the following at risk groups:

- Pregnant women
- Anyone with a long-term condition including diabetes, asthma, liver disease, kidney disease or heart or chest problems
- People undergoing medical treatment who may have a compromised immune system
- People with a neurological condition such as multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy
- People living in a residential or nursing home
- Main carer for an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if they fall ill and anyone aged 65 or over

General hygiene can help reduce the transmission of all viruses, including seasonal flu:

- **Catch it:** Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing using a tissue if possible.
- **Bin it:** Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully
- **Kill it:** Maintain a good standard of hygiene, for example frequent washing of hands with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to your face and/or other people
- Cleaning hard surfaces frequently using normal cleaning products e.g. detergent and warm water

I am pregnant, am I at particular risk?

You may be a greater risk of catching seasonal flu because your immune system is likely to be weaker. Therefore you should talk to your GP or ward staff before visiting anyone with flu.

What do I do if I have flu like symptoms?

Stay at home. Do not visit your relative or friend. If you are an in-patient staff will request a throat and nose swab this will tell you if you have Flu, Respiratory Syncytial Virus or COVID-19

Do not attend for clinic appointment and/or treatment without telephoning the department first to discuss your symptoms with a health care professional.

If you are still concerned, telephone your GP