



Influenza

www.flu.oregon.gov

Senior citizens and the flu

Introduction

Flu can be a very serious illness for older adults—it can lead to pneumonia and worsen symptoms from other chronic health conditions like asthma and heart disease. Most hospitalizations and deaths from the seasonal flu occur in people over the age of 65 who have underlying medical conditions. If you become ill with flu-like symptoms, be sure to call your health care provider right away.



Vaccination is the best protection

- Everyone age 50 and older should get a seasonal flu shot as soon as possible this flu season. Nasal spray vaccine is not recommended for people over the age of 50.
- Getting a seasonal flu shot protects you and those around you. It's safe and you cannot get influenza from the vaccine.
- Get the vaccine as soon as it becomes available in your community because it takes the body about two weeks to build up immunity.
- However, if you don't get your flu shot early, it's not too late to get it in December and beyond, since flu is most common in January and February, and can even continue into April.

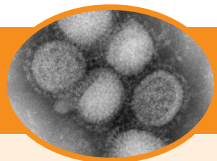
Take common-sense steps to protect yourself from the flu

- There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause the flu. Take these common-sense steps to protect your health:
 - Cover your nose and mouth with your sleeve or 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, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
 - Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
 - Always stay home when you're sick, and limit contact with others to keep them from getting sick.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.



Watch for signs that you may need immediate medical attention

- The symptoms of flu include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have also experienced diarrhea and vomiting.
- Influenza may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.
- Seek emergency medical care if you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs:
 - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath;
 - Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen;
 - Sudden dizziness;
 - Confusion;
 - Severe or persistent vomiting.



For more information

Oregon Public Health Division
www.flu.oregon.gov

Oregon Public Health Hotline
1-800-978-3040

Oregon county health departments
www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/lhd/lhd.shtml



Federal pandemic H1N1 flu information
www.flu.gov

World Health Organization
www.who.int

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