



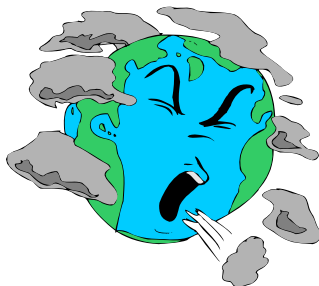
Who is at risk of catching the flu and how long does it last?

People of any age can get the flu, and illness usually lasts two to seven days, sometimes longer in the elderly and in people with chronic diseases. Most people who get the flu are ill for only a few days. However, some people can become very ill, possibly developing complications and requiring hospitalization.

What are the symptoms of the flu?

Symptoms of the flu include:

- fever
- chills
- cough
- runny eyes
- stuffy nose
- sore throat
- headache
- muscle aches
- extreme weakness and fatigue
- ear aches (children)
- nausea (children)
- vomiting (children)
- diarrhea (children)



Coughs and

Sneezes

Spread

Diseases!

Symptoms may vary from person to person. For example, the elderly may not have a fever, while children can have symptoms like earaches or stomach problems.

The cough and fatigue can persist for up to several weeks, making the return to personal and work activities difficult.

If you or a family member have the flu, use this Flu Assessment Tool to help you decide what to do next.

What is the difference between the cold and the flu?

The common cold and flu symptoms are often very similar. Use the chart

below to help you determine if what you have is a simple cold or the flu.

Symptom	Cold	Influenza
Fever	Rare	Usual; high fever (102 ° F/39 ° C - 104 ° F, 40 ° C), sudden onset, lasts 3 to 4 days.
Headache	Rare	Usual; can be severe
Muscle aches and pains	Sometimes, generally mild	Usual; often severe
Tiredness and weakness	Sometimes, generally mild	Usual; severe, may last up to 2 to 3 weeks
Extreme tiredness	Unusual	Usual; early onset, can be severe
Runny, stuffy nose	Common	Common
Sneezing	Common	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Common
Chest discomfort, coughing	Sometimes, mild to moderate	Usual, can become severe.
Complications	Can lead to sinus congestion or infection, and ear aches.*	Can lead to pneumonia and respiratory failure, and become life-threatening. Can worsen a chronic condition.
Prevention	Frequent hand washing	Annual immunization and frequent hand washing

*Colds do not generally result in serious health problems such as pneumonia or bacterial infections.

NOTE: Children may also experience the croup, ear infections, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea when they have influenza - these symptoms are not common in adults.

How does the flu virus spread?

The influenza virus spreads mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing. People can become infected by touching objects or surfaces with flu viruses on them and then touching their eyes, mouth or nose.

How long can someone with the flu infect someone else?

People with the flu may be able to infect others one day before symptoms develop and up to seven days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Children, especially younger children, might be contagious for longer periods.

How you can prevent the spread of germs



Avoid the use of open hands or closed fist to cover your cough. It spreads germs through the air and makes it easy to transfer the germs to other surfaces through touching.



Cough or sneeze into the fold of your arm, trapping germs within the easily washable fabric of your clothes.

Handwashing



To wash hands properly, rub all parts of the hands and wrists with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Wash hands for at least 15 seconds or more. Pay special attention to the areas of the hand most frequently missed.

- Keep nails short.
- Avoid wearing rings.
- Avoid artificial nails or nail varnish.
- Remove watches and bracelets.
- Wash wrists and forearms if they are likely to have been contaminated.
- Make sure that sleeves are rolled up and do not get wet during washing.

If you have any questions regarding cuts, sores, allergies or pre-existing skin conditions, call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000, TTY 1-866-797-0007.

Handwashing with soap and water



Cleaning with alcohol sanitizers



http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/emu/pan_flu/employ/handwash_tech.pdf

<http://www.mcgill.ca/health/infectioncontrol/sleeve>

Time To Talk About Natural Products for the Flu and Colds:

What Does the Science Say?

<http://nccam.nih.gov/health/tips/flucold.htm>

It's that time of year again—cold and flu season. Each year, approximately 5 to 20 percent of Americans come down with the flu. Although most recover without incident, flu-related complications result in more than 200,000 hospitalizations and between 3,000 and 49,000 deaths each year. Colds generally do not cause serious complications, but they are among the leading reasons for visiting a doctor and for missing school or work.

Some people try natural products such as herbs or vitamins and minerals to prevent or treat these illnesses. But do they really work? What does the science say?

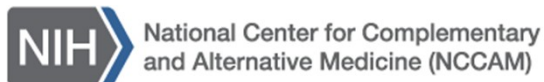
The Flu:

Vaccination is the best protection against getting the flu. Starting in 2010, the Federal Government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended annual flu vaccination for all people aged 6 months and older.

There is currently no strong scientific evidence that any natural product is useful against the flu.

Examples of complementary health practices that have been studied for the flu include:

- Chinese herbal medicines
- Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA)
- Echinacea
- Elderberry
- Green tea
- N-acetylcysteine (NAC)
- North American ginseng
- Oscillococcinum
- Pomegranate extract
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin D.



Colds:

Zinc

Zinc taken orally (by mouth) may help to treat colds, but it can cause side effects and interact with medicines. Zinc is available in two forms—oral zinc (e.g., lozenges, tablets, syrup) and intranasal zinc (e.g., swabs and gels). A 2011 analysis of clinical trials found that oral zinc helps to reduce the length and severity of colds when taken within 24 hours after symptoms start. The analysis also concluded that zinc, taken at low doses for at least 5 months, reduced the number of colds in children.

Intranasal zinc has been linked to a severe side effect (irreversible loss of the sense of

smell) and should not be used.

A note about safety: Oral zinc can cause nausea and other gastrointestinal symptoms. Long-term use of zinc, especially in high doses, can cause problems such as copper deficiency. Zinc may interact with drugs, including antibiotics and penicillamine (a drug used to treat rheumatoid arthritis).

Vitamin C

Vitamin C does not prevent colds and only slightly reduces their length and severity. A 2010 review of scientific literature found that taking vitamin C regularly (at least 0.2 grams per day) did not reduce the likelihood of getting a cold but was linked to small improvements in cold symptoms. In studies in which people took vitamin C only after they got a cold, vitamin C did not improve their symptoms.

A note about safety: Vitamin C is generally considered safe; however, high doses can cause digestive disturbances such as diarrhea and nausea.

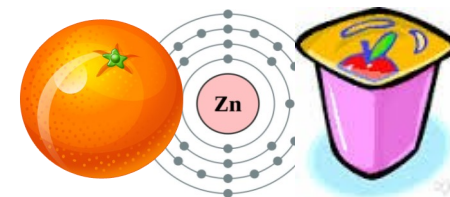
Echinacea

Echinacea has not been proven to help prevent or treat colds. Echinacea is an herbal supplement that some people use to treat or prevent colds. Echinacea products vary widely, containing different species, parts, and preparations of the echinacea plant. Reviews of research have found limited evidence that some echinacea preparations may be useful for treating colds in adults, while other preparations did not seem to be helpful. In addition, echinacea has not been shown to reduce the number of colds that adults catch. Only a small amount of research on echinacea has been done in children, and the results of that research are inconsistent.

A note about safety: Few side effects have been reported in clinical trials of echinacea; however, some people may have allergic reactions. In one large clinical trial in children, those who took echinacea had an increased risk of developing rashes.

Probiotics

The evidence that probiotics may help to prevent colds is weak, and little is known about their long-term safety. Probiotics are a type of “good bacteria,” similar to the microorganisms found in the body, and may be beneficial to health. Probiotics are available as dietary supplements and yogurts, as well as other products such as suppositories and creams. Although a 2011 analysis of research indicated that probiotics might help to prevent upper respiratory tract infections, such as the common cold, the evidence is weak and the results have limitations.



<http://nccam.nih.gov/health/providers/digest/coldflu-science.htm?nav=gsa>