

What to do to fight the flu!

The hospitals of southwestern Pennsylvania, in collaboration with the Allegheny County Health Department and the southwest district of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, are working to lessen the impact of influenza in light of reduced supplies of flu vaccine. They offer the following advice and information, in the hope that residents of the Pittsburgh region will answer the call to work together to defend our community against influenza.

Our goal is to have no more cases of influenza in Pittsburgh this year than in years past when plenty of vaccine has been available.

Influenza is an upper respiratory disease caused by a virus that is expelled into the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It usually spreads from person to person, although it's possible to become infected by touching something with virus on it and then touching your nose or mouth.

People who have been immunized can still pass the virus.



Simple measures you can take!

- ✧ ***Stay home if you are sick, and keep sick children at home.*** People may infect others one day before they show symptoms, and up to 7 days after getting sick. If someone begins to feel ill, keep that person at home.
- ✧ ***Do not visit*** people in hospitals, nursing homes and long-term care facilities if you suspect that you might be coming down with the something. Honor the request of your healthcare institution regarding number and ages of visitors.
- ✧ ***Keep your distance*** from others—especially the elderly, the very young, pregnant women and those with chronic

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medical conditions—when you are sick or if you think you may be coming down with something.

✧ **Cover your mouth** and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then throw it away immediately. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.

✧ **Sanitize your hands often**, especially after coughing or sneezing. If your hands are soiled or have secretions on them, wash them with soap and water, rubbing your hands vigorously together and scrubbing all surfaces. Consider using an alcohol-based hand rub for routine cleaning.

✧ **Ask your employer, daycare provider and athletic club to install hand sanitizer** in restrooms, kitchens and common areas.

✧ **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.** The flu is often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with the flu virus and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth. Some germs, like the flu virus, can live for two hours or more on objects and surfaces.

✧ **Offer a smile and a nod** instead of a handshake. Spread the word, not the flu.

✧ **Observe public hygiene.** Dispose appropriately of items containing personal secretions (such as gum, cigarettes and expectorant) — never on public sidewalks.

✧ **Keep yourself and your family healthy.** This winter, it will be especially important to practice good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.

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