

# National Black Church Initiative National Flu Campaign



We all are at risk for getting and spreading the flu. Having the flu may keep you home from work or school, not to mention making you feel pretty miserable for a week or two. If you have asthma or other lung diseases, you are at higher risk of developing complications from the flu.

## What Are the Symptoms of Influenza?

Flu symptoms often appear suddenly. People at higher risk of complications, such as those with chronic lung disease, should seek prompt medical attention. Treatment may include antiviral medicine which can reduce symptoms if started within a day or two of getting sick.

Symptoms of influenza can include:

- Sudden onset of high fever
- Headache, muscle aches and joint pain
- Cough (usually dry)
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion and runny nose
- Fatigue
- Stomach symptoms such as nausea, vomiting or diarrhea may occur but are more common in children than adults.

Most people recover from the flu within one or two weeks, but others, especially the elderly, may feel weak for a long time even after other symptoms go away.

## Flu symptoms in children

Flu symptoms in school-age children and adolescents are similar to those in adults. Children tend to have higher temperatures than adults, ranging from 103°F to 105°F. Flu in preschool children and infants is hard to pinpoint since its symptoms are so similar to infections caused by other viruses.

If the symptoms mentioned above are present and the flu is circulating in your area, please contact a healthcare provider immediately.

## **What Causes the Flu?**

The flu is caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. These viruses spread when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk, sending droplets with the virus into the air and potentially into the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. You can also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching your own mouth, eyes or nose.

You can spread the flu before you know you are sick, beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick. Some people, especially young children and people with weakened immune systems, might be able to infect others for an even longer time.

## **Flu Risk Factors**

Influenza is a very serious illness for anyone at high risk. Certain diseases that place people at high risk include:

- chronic lung diseases such as asthma, COPD, bronchiectasis, or cystic fibrosis
- heart disease
- chronic kidney disease
- diabetes or other chronic metabolic disorder
- morbid obesity
- severe anemia (including sickle cell anemia)
- diseases (HIV, AIDS) or treatments (steroids, chemotherapy) that suppress immunity
- liver disorders
- children and adolescents who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy