



One minute guide to...

Flu (Influenza)

What is it?

Flu is a common infectious viral illness which can easily spread to other people. Flu is spread by germs from coughs and sneezes, and germs can live on hands and surfaces for 24 hours.

Flu will often get better on its own, but it can make some people seriously ill.

Flu vaccines offer the best protection and are safe and effective. Flu vaccinations for adults and children are offered every year by the NHS to help protect people at risk of flu and its complications:

Flu vaccine - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

How can I reduce the infection?

- wash your hands often with warm water and soap
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- bin used tissues as quickly as possible

Try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if you have a high temperature or you do not feel well enough to do your normal activities.

What are the symptoms and what should I do?

Flu symptoms can come on very quickly and can include:

- a sudden high temperature
- an aching body
- feeling tired or exhausted
- a dry cough a sore throat
- a headache
- difficulty sleeping
- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea or tummy pain
- feeling sick and being sick
- children can also get pain in their ear and appear less active.

Do:

- rest and sleep
- keep warm
- take paracetamol or ibuprofen to lower temperature and treat aches and pains
- drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration

Do not: take paracetamol and flu remedies that contain paracetamol at the same time as it's easy to take more than the recommended dose.

Pharmacists can give treatment advice and recommend flu remedies.

GPs do not recommend antibiotics for flu because they will not relieve your symptoms or speed up recovery. You can also call NHS 111 or go to **111 online** for advice.

Further Information:

From NHS: [Flu - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk); [Flu vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

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Working for Cumberland Council and
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