



## Fighting Off Infection at Work and School

### Flu Season

Influenza, more commonly known as the flu, is an infection that is caused by a virus.

The flu spreads through the air when someone with the flu virus coughs, sneezes or talks. You can also get the flu when you touch an object like a desk or table that has the flu virus on it and then put your fingers in your eyes, nose or mouth.

The flu tends to come on suddenly and you usually feel much worse with the flu than with a common cold.



People at increased risk for the flu are:

- Infants or young children
- In regular close contact with infants or young children
- Over age 50

You know you have the flu when you or your child has:

- A fever over 101 degrees Fahrenheit
- Chills and sweats
- Headache
- Muscle aches and pains
- Loss of appetite
- Dry cough
- Weakness
- Diarrhea and vomiting (children only)

**Flu season is  
December through March.**

### Did you know?

- Approximately 20% of the U.S. population attends schools or works in schools. That's 1 in 5 people.
- Every year, almost 22 million school days are lost because of illness.



- Some germs like viruses and bacteria can live from 20 minutes to 2 hours (or more) on surfaces like doorknobs, desks and tables.

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University of Illinois Extension is the flagship outreach effort of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, offering educational programs to residents of all of Illinois' 102 counties. Through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work, U of I Extension's programs are aimed at making life better, healthier, safer and more profitable for individuals and their communities.



URBAN COMMUNITY HEALTH

EDUCATION

PREVENTION

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Contact University of Illinois  
Extension for more  
information and activities  
about hand-washing or other  
health issues. Health education  
workshops also are available.

Urban Community Health is on the web!

<http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/cook/commhealth.html>

*To Your Health* is a quarterly newsletter brought to you by University of Illinois Extension, Urban Community Health in Cook County.

Sources:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/influenza/DS00081>  
[http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/home\\_work\\_school.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/home_work_school.htm)  
[http://www.cdc.gov/flu/2008-09\\_flu\\_qa.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/2008-09_flu_qa.htm)  
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm>

## Preventing the Flu

**Get vaccinated.** Getting the flu vaccine is recommended as the most important thing you can do to protect yourself against the flu.

**Wash your hands.** Wash your hands often with soap and water. This is the best way to prevent the spread of germs. Hand wipes or gel can also be used if soap and water are not available.

**Stay home.** When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too. If possible, stay home from work or school.

**Practice other good health habits.** Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, drink plenty of fluids and eat healthy foods.

**Avoid close contact.** Try to avoid close contact with people who are sick.

**Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs are spread when a person touches something that has germs on it and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.

**Cover your mouth and nose.** When you sneeze or cough, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue.

