

## Influenza (Flu) Information



October 1 is the traditional start to the flu season. The seasonal flu vaccine is available throughout Texas. The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) encourages everyone 6 months or older to get vaccinated yearly to protect themselves and others from the flu.

Use the Flu Vaccine Finder on TexasFlu.org to check availability in your area.

**Flu Vaccine Finder:**

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/txflu/flu-locator.shtml>

For more information on the flu, go to:

**TexasFlu.org:** <http://www.texasflu.org/>

### **What is the flu?**

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus. It attacks the nose, throat, and lungs. It can be prevented by vaccination.

### **What are the symptoms of the flu?**

Symptoms include fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches. Children may have additional symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

**Flu is spread** in the same way that cold viruses are spread.

Good hand washing is extremely important to reduce the exposure.

Encourage use of the following **prevention measures**:

- cover all coughs and sneezes,
- wash hands frequently and especially after coughing, sneezing, and blowing one's nose,
- avoid touching of nose, mouth, and eyes, and
- dispose of all contaminated tissues.

Look for these **symptoms** if you suspect the flu:

- onset of fever over 102.5 F
- severe muscle aches/joint pain
- chills

What you can do:

- Stay healthy
- Get vaccinated
- There is medication that can shorten the course of the flu, but it must be given within the first 48 hours of the illness.
- **If you suspect that you or your child may have the flu, be sure to call your doctor right away.**