

Jan. 5, 2017 • Information on treatment for the flu

Communicable Disease Division
3629 South D Street, Tacoma, WA 98418
(253) 798-6410 (phone) • (253) 798-7666 (fax)

Worried about the flu?

Influenza is widespread and at epidemic levels. The best way to protect yourself and your family is still getting a [flu vaccine](#). Frequent hand washing and avoiding others who are sick also helps. Flu vaccines can take up to two weeks to take effect. What if, despite your best efforts, you get sick—do you know when to seek medical care?

What should I do if I have flu symptoms?

Not all patients with suspected influenza need to be seen by a healthcare provider. If there are no underlying chronic health conditions you can usually treat yourself or your child at home by getting plenty of rest and drinking lots of fluids.

When should I see a doctor?

See a healthcare provider for an evaluation if you are experiencing any of the following:

- Fever greater than 100.4 degrees that's lasted more than four days (fevers may be intermittent).
- Fever that went away but has returned two or more days later.
- Coughing up mucus tinged with blood.
- Rattling chest sounds when taking a deep breath.
- Fainting spells, dizziness and/or severe dry mouth.
- Urinating less (or babies have less than three wet diapers per 24 hours).
- You are pregnant (pregnant women should seek immediate care if flu symptoms are present rather than making an appointment at an OB office).
- People younger than age five or older than age 65.
- People with chronic medical illness such as diabetes, heart failure, cancer, etc. or other high risk groups for complications from the flu.

When should I call 911 or be seen at an emergency room?

Seek emergency medical attention if you are experiencing any of the following:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing.
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen.
- Bluish or gray skin color.
- Severe or persistent vomiting.
- Not waking up or not interacting.
- Sudden dizziness.
- Unable to talk in full sentences.
- Confusion.
- Children who are so irritable that they do not want to be held.

More information on flu recommendations and where to get vaccinated can be found at www.tpchd.org/flu.