

What You Should Do If You Get the Flu



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You have a fever, are coughing and your body aches.

Chances are you've got the flu and even though you feel miserable, you think you should still go to school or work.

You shouldn't. You could be contagious and get others sick.

Instead, here is what health officials recommend you do:

1. Stay at home and rest

Most people who get the flu have mild illness and do not need medical care or [antiviral drugs](#). Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without using fever-reducing medication.

2. Avoid close contact with people

While sick, limit contact with others to [keep from infecting them](#). Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw it away after the first use. [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

3. Drink plenty of water and other clear liquids

Drink plenty of clear fluids as soon as the first flu symptoms appear to avoid dehydration. Water is fine, but soup is better. You should eat nourishing food. Pass on alcohol or caffeinated beverages.

4. Treat fever and cough with over-the-counter medications

Fever reducers, antihistamines, decongestants and cough medicines could help you feel better, but they won't help you recover any faster. Children and teenagers with flu symptoms (particularly fever) should avoid taking aspirin or aspirin-containing combination medications. Typical flu symptoms may last up to two weeks.

5. Call your doctor if at risk for complications

If your symptoms are severe or you are pregnant, 65 years or older or have a chronic medical condition, call your doctor. You might need antiviral drugs to treat your flu.

Millions of people avoid getting sick every year by getting a flu shot or practicing good hand-washing hygiene.

Everyone 6 months and older should [get a flu vaccine every year](#). The vaccine is safe and effective. It takes two weeks for immunity to develop.

There are [several flu strains](#) circulating in the region, so if you already got and have recovered from the flu, you could get sick again.

It is not too late to get a flu shot. Flu activity in San Diego intensifies February and the flu season typically lasts through the end of March or early April.

The flu vaccine is available at doctors' offices and retail pharmacies. If you don't have medical insurance, you can go to a County public health center to get vaccinated. For a list of locations, visit www.sdiz.org or call 2-1-1.