



FAITHFULLY PREVENTING THE FLU TOGETHER

Faith communities and our leaders are trusted messengers about stewardship of life, health and community. Together, we can reduce the suffering caused by flu this year.

What is the Flu?

Influenza, commonly called the flu, is caused by viruses that infect the respiratory tract.

Flu Symptoms

- Headache
- Extreme Tiredness
- Dry Cough
- Sore Throat
- Runny or Stuffy Nose
- Muscle Aches



Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea are more common among children than adults.

Flu Consequences

The influenza virus is a leading cause of lost work time, school absences and hospitalizations. Each year, an average of 220,000 people are hospitalized and 36,000 people die from this serious contagious disease. Flu can have a major impact on the overall health and functioning of a community, especially for those who are vulnerable—children, frail elderly, those with limited English, those who are economically challenged, refugees, the undocumented, etc.

How the Flu Spreads

After a person has been infected with the virus, symptoms usually appear within one to four days. The infection is considered contagious for up to five days after the symptoms appear and illness usually lasts a week or two. People with the flu can spread the virus *before* they know they are sick.



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How to Avoid the Flu

Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water. Teach children the same healthy habit.

Cover your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze into a facial tissue or your arm, not your hands. Promptly discard used tissues.

Do not share things that go into the mouth, like drinking cups or straws.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, stay home until you recover. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

How to Fight the Flu


The Centers for Disease Control recommends that everyone over six months old receive flu vaccination each year. **Visit www.flu.gov to find a flu vaccine clinic near you.**

A lifestyle of adequate rest and nutrition will further enhance your natural immune strength.

Remember One Another

Encourage and assist the most vulnerable in receiving affordable vaccination, which can be administered by shot or by nasal spray. Contact Melissa Ponce at mponce@ilmaternal.org or 312-491-8161 x33 at the Chicago Area Immunization Campaign for information about local clinics or vouchers which may still be available.

Respond to symptoms immediately. Choose to leave work to recover well and avoid further transmission to others. Support others' choices to rest and take time off as needed. Offer to help with childcare and other household needs.

A PRAYER: *O Holiness within and around us, thank you for those individuals and family members, faith leaders, doctors, nurses, other health care providers, hospitals and clinics, and chaplains who help us care for our bodies. Give us strength to do our part in care for our own bodies and for those with whom we share our world. Strengthen and guide us all in efforts to offer health, wholeness, and human dignity to all.* 

Learn more about faith-based partnerships for flu prevention at www.chicagofaithandhealth.org.

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