Symptoms of Flu & When to Seek Medical Care

This information is provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for veterans, their families, friends, volunteers, and employees. It describes common symptoms of influenza (flu) and how to decide when to stay at home or when to seek medical care.

Symptoms of Flu

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Tiredness (can be extreme)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea (more in children than adults)

If the person has flu symptoms they should:

- Rest
- Drink fluids
- Stay home
- Take fever reducers such as acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) or ibuprofen (e.g., Advil or Motrin)

But IF the person:

- Is unable to drink enough fluids (has dark urine; may feel dizzy when standing)
- Has the fever for more than 3 to 5 days
- Feels better, then gets a fever again

CALL a healthcare provider

Or IF the person:

- Is short of breath or is wheezing
- Coughs up blood
- Has pain in the chest when breathing
- Has heart disease (like angina or congestive heart failure) and has chest pain
- Is unable to walk or sit up, or function normally (others might be the ones to notice this—especially in elderly persons)

GO RIGHT AWAY for medical care

Where Can I Learn More?

- Your healthcare provider
- Your local VA
- Local and national news
- On these Web Sites
  - www.publichealth.va.gov/Flu/pandemicflu.htm
  - vawww.vhaco.va.gov/phshcg/Flu/pandemicflu.htm (VA staff only)
  - www.pandemicflu.gov

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