

Your Seasonal Flu Guide

What is the seasonal flu? Seasonal influenza, or the seasonal flu, is a common and highly contagious respiratory infection that affects the nose, throat and lungs. The flu strains change from year-to-year, that's why it is important to get an annual flu shot. Full protection against the flu takes about two weeks from the time you get the shot and lasts about six months. In Canada, the flu season typically occurs between November and April. Most people recover from the flu in about a week, but some people – including infants, children, adults and the elderly with chronic health conditions (such as Diabetes, Heart disease, Lung disorders, Cancer or Kidney disease) – are at greater risk of serious complications such as pneumonia.

Did you know? Seasonal influenza is a serious illness that infects millions of Canadians every year.

What is the difference between seasonal flu and a cold? Everyone is at risk of catching the flu virus – even healthy, young adults. While symptoms may vary from person to person, they may include the following:

	Seasonal flu			Common cold
What is it?	Influenza, or the flu, is a common and highly contagious, infectious respiratory disease that affects the nose, throat and lungs. Influenza viruses can change rapidly.			A cold is a mild infection of the nose and throat caused by a variety of viruses. Although a cold might linger, the symptoms remain mild.
Symptoms	Almost Always	Common	Sometimes	Runny nose Sneezing Cough Sore throat
	Sudden onset of cough and fever	Fatigue Muscle aches Sore throat Headache Decreased appetite Runny nose	Nausea Vomiting Diarrhea	

If you develop the following symptoms, you should see a healthcare provider right away:

- Shortness of breath, rapid or difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Bluish or grey skin color
- Bloody or coloured mucus/spit
- Sudden dizziness or confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- High fever lasting more than three days

Additional symptoms to watch for in children include:

- Not drinking enough fluids or eating
- Not waking up or interacting
- Irritability (not wanting to play or be held)

