
a series of fact sheets written
by experts in the field of liver
disease

HCV Wellness:
Influenza

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Sometimes people have a cold and they use the expression, "I have the flu." This is a common mistake. Although both are caused by viruses, the flu is more severe than a cold.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) lists the following symptoms of the flu:

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Extreme fatigue
- Dry Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches
- Intestinal problems such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea

The flu travels from person to person, usually by coughing and sneezing. A good way to get the flu is by touching your nose, eyes or mouth after touching something contaminated with the virus. Healthy adults

can pass on the flu to others a day before they show any flu symptoms and up to 5 days after they become ill. This means you can pass the flu before you even know you have it.

There are steps you can take to protect yourself and others from the flu:

- Get a flu shot
- Keep your distance from people who are sick
- If you have the flu, avoid close contact with people
- If you are sick, stay home from work, school and other public places
- Cover your mouth with tissue when you cough or sneeze
- If you do not have tissue close by, turn your head and cough into your upper sleeve
- Properly dispose of used tissue
- If you have the flu, wash your hands before touching food or objects that other people may use
- If you don't have the flu, wash your hands after touching publicly shared objects
- Clean publicly shared items, such as telephones, keyboards, and faucet handles
- If soap and water are not available, use sanitizing wipes or gels to clean your hands
- Keep yourself healthy by developing good sleeping, eating, and exercise habits

If you do get the flu, be sure to rest and drink plenty of liquids. To reduce fever, stay cool, but not cold. Acetaminophen, removing layers of blankets and clothing, and lukewarm sponge baths can provide relief.

Call your medical provider if you cannot get symptoms under control, such as fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. Since you can pass this on to others, call for advice and let your medical provider determine if you need to be seen.

There are antiviral medications that can reduce the severity of the flu. These are effective if taken within the first 48 hours of the flu. Call your medical provider as soon as you show signs of the flu and discuss if antiviral medication is appropriate for you.

Flu Shot Recommendations:

The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommend that the following people get the yearly flu shot:

- People at high risk for complications from the flu, including:
 - o Children aged 6 months until their 5th birthday,
 - o Pregnant women,
 - o People 50 years of age and older, and
 - o People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (such as hepatitis C or hepatitis B)
 - o People who live in nursing homes and other long term care facilities.
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:
 - o Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu (see above)
 - o Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated)
- Healthcare workers

For more information: www.cdc.gov/flu

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For more information about hepatitis C, hepatitis B and HCV coinfections, please visit www.hcvadvocate.org.

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