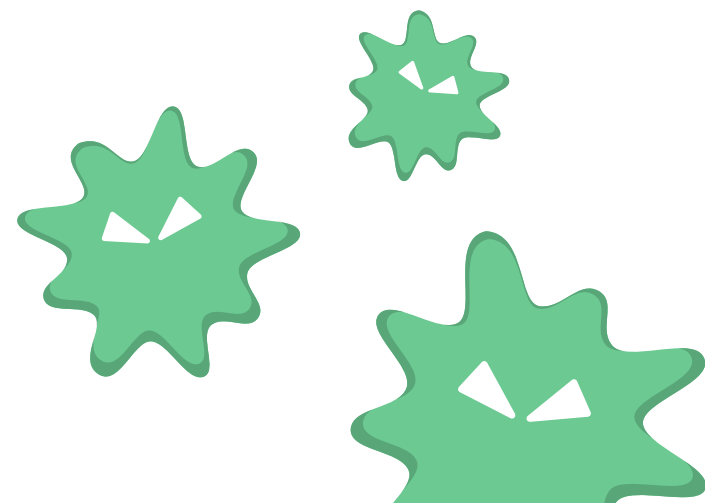


PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF FLU

- You can help stop yourself getting flu or spreading it to others using good hygiene measures.
- Always wash your hands regularly with soap and warm water, as well as:
 - Wipe surfaces regularly, with a disinfectant to get rid of germs; these include door handles, telephones, and the computer keyboard
 - Use tissues to cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze
 - Dispose of used tissues in a bin immediately after use
 - Avoid unnecessary contact with other people so as not to infect others
 - Do not go to work or school until you are better.
 - The annual flu vaccine is the most effective way to help reduce the risk of becoming infected and spreading the flu.

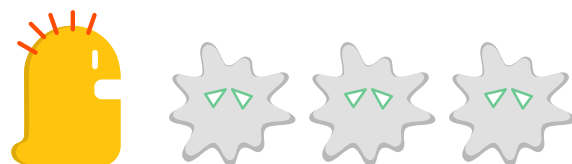


THE INFLUENZA VACCINE

The influenza vaccine is available for free to:

-  **55+** PERSONS AGED 55 YEARS AND OLDER
-  PERSONS OF ANY AGE SUFFERING FROM - CHRONIC RESPIRATORY DISEASE, CHRONIC HEART DISEASE, CHRONIC LIVER DISEASE, CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE, DIABETES MELLITUS, ANY CHRONIC, IMMUNODEFICIENCY STATE, INCLUDING HIV OR AIDS
-  CHILDREN FROM THE AGE OF 6 MONTHS TO 59 MONTHS
-  PERSONS RESIDING IN INSTITUTIONS
-  STUDENTS ATTENDING SPECIAL SCHOOLS

The viruses that cause influenza change every year. In order to remain protected you need to take the influenza vaccine every year. For more information contact the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate on 23266000 or the National



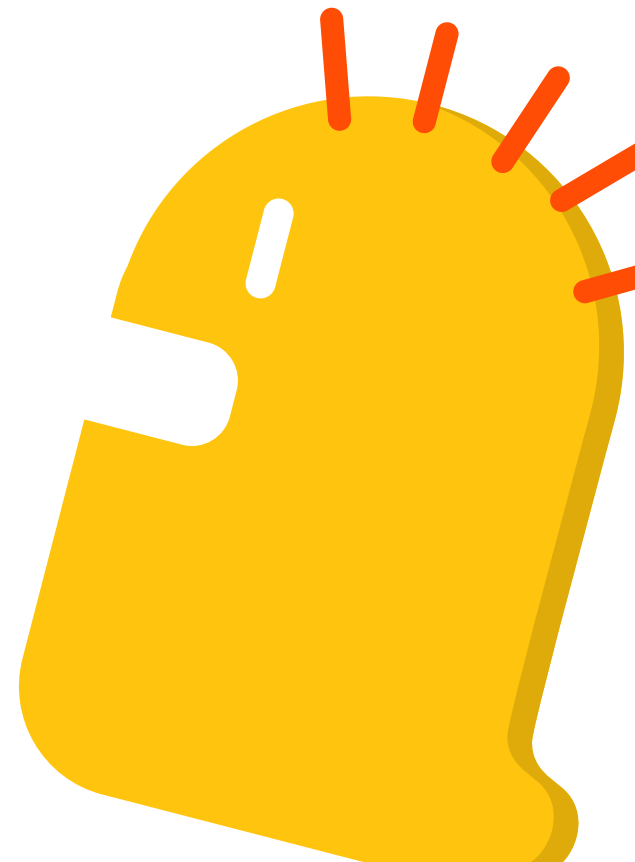
T: 2326 6000, E: health.pro@gov.mt

   HPDPMalta

 **Health Promotion & Disease Prevention Directorate**
Tel: 2326 6000, www.healthpromotion.gov.mt

 OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
MINISTRY FOR HEALTH

SEASONAL INFLUENZA



INFORMATION ON INFLUENZA



Influenza is a common infectious respiratory viral illness which can become quite severe in some cases. You can get influenza all the year round, but it is more common in winter. This is why it is known as "seasonal influenza".

Flu is different from the common cold as it is caused by a different group of viruses. Flu symptoms such as blocked or runny nose, sneezing, and a sore throat usually have a more sudden onset, are more severe and last longer than those of the common cold.

Flu can make you feel so exhausted and unwell that you have to stay in bed.

Flu can give you any of the following symptoms:

- | | |
|---|---|
|  SUDDEN FEVER - A TEMPERATURE OF 38°C OR ABOVE |  DRY, CHESTY COUGH |
|  HEADACHE |  TIREDNESS AND WEAKNESS |
|  CHILLS |  ACHING MUSCLES |
|  LIMB OR JOINT PAIN |  DIARRHEA OR ABDOMINAL TUMMY PAIN ESPECIALLY IN CHILDREN |
|  NAUSEA AND VOMITING |  SORE THROAT |
|  RUNNY OR BLOCKED NOSE |  SNEEZING |
|  LOSS OF APPETITE |  DIFFICULTY IN SLEEPING |

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE COMMON COLD & THE FLU

Sometimes it can be difficult to tell if you have influenza or just a common cold, as the symptoms can be quite similar. The main differences are:

Flu symptoms:

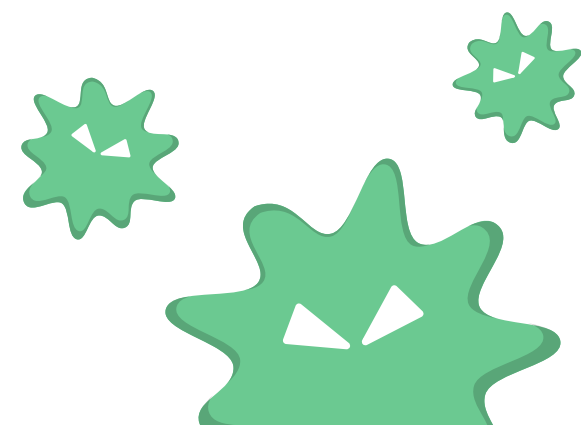
- appear suddenly
- usually include fever and aching muscles
- make you feel too unwell to continue with your daily activities

Cold symptoms:

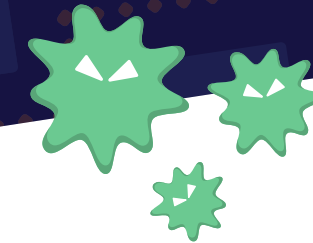
- appear gradually
- mainly affect your nose and throat
- are fairly mild, so you can still continue with your daily activities

If you are normally fit and healthy and have mild influenza like symptoms, there is usually no need to see a doctor. The best thing to do is to rest at home, keep warm and drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration.

If necessary you can take medication to lower the fever and relieve aches and pains. Do not give aspirin to children under 12 years of age. Do not go to work or school until you feel better. This usually takes about a week.



THESE ARE TIME WHEN YOU WOULD NEED TO VISIT YOUR GP



You should consider visiting your GP if:

- | | |
|--|---|
|  YOU ARE 65 YEARS OF AGE OR OVER |  YOU HAVE A WEAKENED IMMUNE SYSTEM - FOR EXAMPLE, IF TAKING CHEMOTHERAPY OR HAVE HIV YOU DEVELOP CHEST PAIN, SHORTNESS OF BREATH, OR DIFFICULTY IN BREATHING, OR START COUGHING UP BLOOD |
|  YOU HAVE A LONG-TERM MEDICAL CONDITION - SUCH AS DIABETES, HEART DISEASE, LUNG DISEASE, KIDNEY DISEASE OR A NEUROLOGICAL DISEASE |  YOU ARE PREGNANT |
| |  YOUR SYMPTOMS ARE GETTING WORSE OVER TIME OR HAVE NOT IMPROVED AFTER A WEEK |

In these situations, you may need medication to treat or prevent flu complications. Your doctor may recommend medication to reduce your symptoms.

How do you get flu?

The influenza virus is contained in the millions of tiny droplets that come out of the nose and mouth when someone who is infected coughs or sneezes. These droplets typically spread for about one meter. They hang suspended in the air for a while before landing on surfaces, where the virus can survive for up to 24 hours.

Surfaces at home and in public places can easily become contaminated with the flu virus, including door handles, remote controls, stair rails, telephones and computer keyboards. It is very important to wash your hands with soap frequently.

Anyone who breathes in the droplets can get flu. One can also get infected by touching surfaces that droplets have landed on and then touching the nose, eyes or mouth.

