

Cold & Flu: Fact or Fiction

"The best way to avoid illness like colds and Norovirus is by washing your hands."

Fact

"You can catch a cold by staying outside in the cold for too long."

Fiction

"Antibiotics can cure a cold or the flu."

Fiction

"If you have a flu shot one year you don't need it the next year."

Fiction

"It can be difficult to tell the difference between a cold and the flu."

Fact

Resources

CDC Flu Vaccine
www.cdc.gov/flu

Hand Washing
www.washup.org

Health Services
(815) 753-1311

**Preventive
Medicine**
(815) 753-9759

Influenza (Flu) Shot Time

Health Services is offering flu shots to students again this fall, beginning Oct. 13.

The influenza virus, commonly called "the flu," is a contagious disease which can cause an individual to miss a few days of classes and other activities.

The influenza virus should not be confused with "the stomach flu." Influenza is spread by coughing, sneezing, or nasal secretions.

Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, headache, chills, muscle aches, and fatigue.

However, some people become much more ill leading to pneumonia, hospitalization, or serious complications.

The vaccine is recommended for people who can spread illness to others including:

- household contacts
- caregivers
- medical personnel
- community service workers
- individuals living in dormitories (NIU residence halls)
- persons who want to reduce the likelihood of becoming ill

Health Services is offering two types of influenza vaccines this year; the injection or "flu shot" and the new intranasal vaccine (brand name FluMist), given by a spray in each nostril.

The flu shot, containing inactivated virus, is most frequently used; however, it is not recommended for people who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs or who have had a severe past reaction to the flu shot.

The nasal spray, FluMist, uses a weakened live virus and should not be used by those with heart or lung disease, asthma, pregnant women, and some others.

Wash Your Hands: Prevent Germs and Illness

Hand washing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infections.

According to an American Society for Microbiology study, 95% of Americans say they always wash their hands after they flush, but only 77% actually do.

Germs like Streptococci, E-coli, Hepatitis A, Norovirus, Shigella, and others, which can cause jaundice, diarrhea, sore throat, and vomiting can be eliminated by washing your hands.

Scrub hands vigorously with soap and water for twenty seconds or more. You can also use an alcohol-based sanitizer.

Health Services recommends talking with your health care provider to determine which vaccine is appropriate for you.

Both vaccinations require two weeks for protection to develop after the vaccination is administered.

We recommend that the flu shot be administered in October or November, but getting it in December or later will also be beneficial.

The flu shot is available at Health Services for \$20. FluMist is also available (supplies are limited) for \$30.

Appointments for vaccinations are not necessary: come into Health Services Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM and check in at the front desk.

If you have questions, please call Preventive Medicine at (815) 753-9759.

Remember to wash:

- Before eating
- Before, during, and after handling food
- After using the bathroom
- After contact with blood or body fluids
- After handling animals, their waste or toys

[\(Full story on the Norovirus\)](#)