

# Seasonal FLU

Flu is a common infectious viral illness spread by coughs and sneezes. You can catch flu – short for influenza – all year round, but it's especially common in **winter**, which is why it's also known as "**seasonal flu**".

It's not the same as the common cold. Flu usually starts more suddenly, is more severe and lasts longer.

## The main symptoms of flu include:

- a high temperature (fever) of 38C (100.4F) or above
- tiredness and weakness so much so that you need to stay in bed
- a headache
- general aches and pains
- a dry, chesty cough

## You can help stop yourself catching flu or spreading it to others by:

- washing your hands regularly with soap and warm water
- regularly cleaning surfaces such as your computer keyboard, telephone and door handles to get rid of germs
- using tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze
- putting used tissues in a bin as soon as possible
- avoiding unnecessary contact with other people while you're infectious

## To ease symptoms:

- rest at home
- keep warm and drink plenty of water to stay hydrated
- take paracetamol or ibuprofen to lower a high temperature and to relieve aches if necessary
- **stay off work or school** until you're feeling better, for most people this will take about a week

## When to see your GP:

If you are normally fit and healthy there is usually no need to see a doctor but consider contacting your GP if:

- you are 65 years of age or over
- you are pregnant
- you have a chronic medical condition – such as diabetes, heart, lung or kidney disease, or a neurological disease
- you have a weakened immune system – e.g. you're having chemotherapy or have HIV
- you develop chest pain, difficulty breathing, or start coughing up blood
- your symptoms are getting worse over time or haven't improved after a week

For more information visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Flu/>

**Call NHS111 if you are concerned or need advice**