

Influenza (Flu A and B)

When flu-like symptoms come on suddenly, it may be caused by the influenza virus — either flu A or flu B (both strains can be treated similarly). Influenza is common in all age groups.

- Influenza is very contagious.
 - Flu viruses live in the nose and throat. When an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, tiny droplets carrying the virus go into the air and can be breathed in by others.
 - The virus can also land on surfaces and be picked up by touching those surfaces, then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Flu symptoms can be treated, and early treatment helps.
 - Most people recover within a week or two, but influenza can cause serious complications, especially in young children, older adults, pregnant women, and people with chronic health conditions.
 - Antiviral medicines work best when started within the first 48 hours of illness and can help shorten the duration of symptoms.
- Preventing the spread of flu is important.
 - Annual flu vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and others.
 - Staying home when sick, covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands often, and wearing a mask when needed can help stop the spread.

+ Symptoms

Someone with influenza may have the following symptoms:

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|------------------------|---|
| - Fever or chills | - Body aches |
| - Sore throat | - Fatigue |
| - Cough and congestion | - Flu A is more likely to cause severe respiratory symptoms |
| - Headaches | - Flu B is more likely to cause gastrointestinal issue (nausea, vomiting) |

+ Diagnosis

The provider will examine you or your child, ask about signs and symptoms, and then test for influenza.

- There are 2 types of tests we use to test for influenza at the SmartMED facility. Both use the same soft cotton swab. The provider will brush the swab within the nose for 5 seconds on either side. This may cause eye watering, but should not be painful.
- All tests at SmartMED are run in house. We offer:
 - o Rapid antigen testing: This test runs for approximately 15 minutes and you will receive your results the same day.
 - This test is most accurate 2-3 days after symptom onset.
 - o 4-Target PCR testing: This test includes Flu A, Flu B, COVID, and RSV. This runs for approximately 45 minutes and you will receive your results the same day.
 - This test is recommended if symptom onset is within 24 hours.
- Both the PCR and the rapid test for both Flu A and Flu B.

Please note: You do not have to wait on site for your results for either test, we will call you when they are complete.

+ Treatment

If you or your child test positive for either flu A or flu B, there are a few different ways to be treated.

- As influenza is a virus, antibiotics are not needed. There are two options for antiviral medications that we are able to prescribe here at SmartMED if desired.
- Antiviral medications for the flu include Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and Baloxavir (Xofluza).
 - o Antiviral medications must be started within 48 hours of symptom onset for them to work.
 - o Antiviral medications can decrease the duration of symptoms by about 1 day.
 - o These medications may cause gastrointestinal upset (nausea, diarrhea, vomiting).
 - o In some cases these medications can cause night terrors and hallucinations in young children.

+ How to Care for Your Child At Home

There are things you can do at home to help you feel better.

- Drink lots of fluids. Water, Gatorade, Pedialyte, and popsicles are good options.
- For fever and body aches, acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) can be taken as directed. Read the label to find appropriate dosing.

For symptoms, there are many over-the counter medications that can help. Below are a few multi-symptom medications we like to use in adults:

- THERAFLU Flu Relief Max Strength (Contains 1000mg acetaminophen)
 - o This is a powder you mix into hot water.
- DayQuil and NyQuil
- Coricidin HBP Maximum Strength Multi-Symptom Flu
 - o This is safe for people with high blood pressure. May cause drowsiness.
- Sudafed Head Congestion and Flu Severe
- Alka-Seltzer PLUS Severe Cold Powerfast Fizz
 - o Dissolvable seltzer tablets you can drop in water.
- Sambucol Cold and Flu Relief
 - o This is a more natural option that uses elderberry and vitamins to support your immune system.
- Mucinex Nightshift Cold and Flu (Contains acetaminophen)
 - o Can cause drowsiness. Available in liquid or caplet form for ages 12+.

Important: Always read labels and use medications as directed. Many cold and flu products contain multiple active ingredients—be sure not to double up on medications like acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

If you take prescription medications or have chronic conditions (especially high blood pressure), check with your pharmacist or provider before starting a new OTC product.

Below are a few multi-symptom medications we like to use with our own children and families:

- Children's Mucinex Cough and Congestion
- Children's Mucinex Multi-Symptom Cold
- Children's Nyquil Cold and Cough Medicine
- Children's Robitussin Cough and Cold CF



- Children's Robitussin Cough and Cold Long-Acting
- Children's Sudafed PE Cough and Cold
- Dimetapp Cold and Cough
- Dimetapp Multisymptom Cold and Flu
- PediaCare Cough and Cold
- PediaCare Cough and Congestion
- Mucinex Children's Cough and Congestion
 - o Suitable for kids age 4 and up, comes as a fun, fizzy powder!
- Hyland's Organic Kids All-in-One Cough Syrup
- Zarbee's Children's Daytime Cough Syrup + Mucus

+ How to Protect Others

- You may return to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours: your symptoms are getting better overall and you do not have a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medications).
- Your child may return to school, day care, and normal activities when, for at least 24 hours: your child's symptoms are getting better overall and your child does not have a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medications).
- Encourage frequent handwashing. Wash hands for 15-20 seconds with soap and water.
- Cover mouth when coughing and sneezing.
- Do not share utensils, cups, or straws.
- Take the time to get a flu vaccine. The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important action in reducing your risk of flu and its potentially serious outcomes.

+ When to Call Your Provider

Call your provider if any symptoms worsen.

- Look for signs of dehydration.
 - No urination
 - Hard or fast breathing
 - Dry or sticky mouth
 - Child (4 months and older) has less than 3 wet diapers a day or pees less than 3 times a day
 - Very dark urine
 - No tears when crying
 - Sunken-looking eyes



+ Helpful Links

[Pediatric Flu Treatment, Symptoms and Prevention | Children's Healthcare of Atlanta](#)

[Influenza \(Flu\) | Influenza \(Flu\) | CDC](#)

[Influenza \(the flu\) | Texas Children's](#)