

10 Things You Can Do To Prevent Flu

**VALUE
HEALTH**
PROTECT AGAINST
INFLUENZA

- 1. Get a flu shot.** Go ahead, stick out your arm. Getting vaccinated is the single best way to keep yourself from getting flu — and spreading it to other people. The Virginia Department of Health recommends vaccination as long as vaccine is available.
- 2. Wash your hands often.** Especially before and after eating and after using the bathroom. Just like your mom always told you.
- 3. Cough or sneeze into your arm or sleeve, not your hands.** Flu virus is spread by coughing and sneezing. Covering your mouth is not just good manners, it's vital to preventing the spread of flu and other illnesses. The best way to prevent flu is to sneeze or cough into the crook of your arm so your hands do not get contaminated.
- 4. If you feel sick, stay home.** If you've got the flu — or any other respiratory illness — stay home and get better. Do not go to work. If your child is diagnosed with the flu, keep him or her home until they are well.
- 5. Don't care for shots? Try the nasal spray vaccine.** There are two types of vaccine. One is administered via injection, usually in the arm. The other is given as a nasal spray. The nasal spray vaccine is recommended for healthy individuals age 5 to 49. It is equally effective and also widely available.
- 6. Carry hand sanitizer as a backup.** Carry gel hand sanitizer or alcohol-based disposable hand wipes to use when you can't get to the sink. These are easy to find in your local drugstore.
- 7. Wipe down public items.** For those items around the home or office that everyone uses — like telephones and doorknobs — keep a box of alcohol-based disposable wipes handy and rub them down periodically, as well as before and after use.
- 8. Avoid infecting yourself.** On the chance that you have virus on your hands, try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth unless you know your hands are perfectly clean.
- 9. Pay attention to your overall health.** Make sure you're getting enough sleep, maintaining a healthy diet and managing stress. The better you take care of yourself, the better your body will be able to fend off flu and other viruses.
- 10. Your doctor may recommend anti-viral medication.** There are medications available by prescription that may help to prevent flu if taken regularly, or to lessen flu symptoms if you have already been infected.