

Prepare for the Flu



Here is practical advice to help you and your family prepare for the flu season, which occurs every year from October to May.

Make a Plan

- Prepare a written plan for yourself and your family.
- Plan for an extended stay at home.
- Determine how you will care for your children and other dependent relatives.
- Make alternative work arrangements, such as telecommuting.
- Ask your employer about a business continuity plan for the flu.

Build a Kit

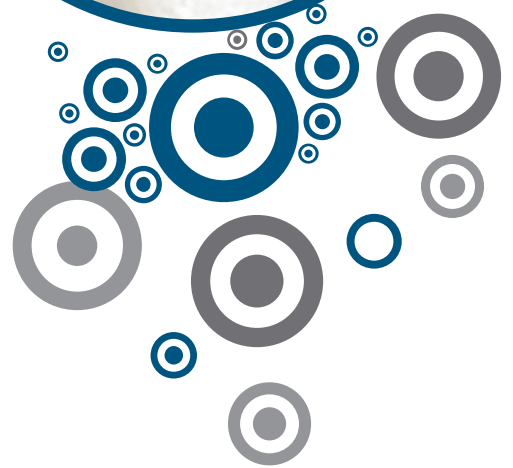
- Keep at least a 2-week supply of flu-fighting essentials (water, food, medication, tissue, etc.) to help care for yourself and your family.

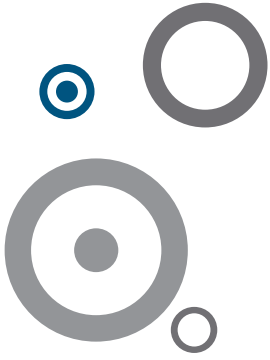
Stay Informed

- Access reliable news, radio, and Internet sources.
- Visit texasflu.org, flu.gov, and texashelp.tamu.edu on the Web.
- Dial 211 to learn about local resources, such as where to get a flu shot, where to find a doctor, and answers to general flu questions.
- Contact your county office of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

Enhance Your Immunity

- Get your annual flu shot in the fall for a full season of protection.
- Have healthy lifestyle habits.
 - Eat a balanced diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables.
 - Get plenty of rest. Sleep at least 7 to 8 hours a night.
 - Exercise regularly—at least 30 minutes of activity most days of the week.





- Reduce your daily stress level—plan ahead, start projects early, prioritize activities, and delegate tasks.

Wash Your Hands

The single most effective way to prevent the spread of contagious illnesses, like the flu.

- Wash regularly for at least 20 seconds, rubbing your hands together briskly while using soap and warm water.
- Use a hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol when water is not available. Hand sanitizers do not remove surface dirt or other debris; therefore, wash hands as soon as running water is available.

Clean and Disinfect

- First, clean your household with detergent and water to remove surface dirt and other debris.
- Then, sanitize common areas with a disinfectant to kill germs, such as an
 - EPA-registered disinfectant, or a
 - dilute bleach solution.

Cover Your Cough or Sneeze

- Cough or sneeze into the sleeve of your upper arm or the crook of your elbow.
- Use disposable tissues when available.
- Wash your hands after sneezing into a tissue or blowing your nose.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Keep Your Distance

- Remain at home when sick to prevent the spread of the flu.
 - Do not return to school or work until your fever is below 100 °F for at least 24 hours without using fever-reducing medicine.*
- Stay 3 to 6 feet away from others who are sick.
- Avoid kissing and hugging others while ill.

**Fever-reducing medicine includes Acetaminophen (Tylenol, generic brand), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, generic brand), and aspirin. Do not give aspirin to anyone age 20 or younger because of the danger of Reye's syndrome, a rare but serious illness.*

For more information about the flu, visit the Texas Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) website at texashelp.tamu.edu.

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