

# Flu & Pneumonia Awareness Month

Issue 1

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## *To Exercise or To Rest - That Is The Question...*

You're not feeling real great, but you hate to miss your workout. Will exercising help, or will it just prolong the infection? The answer depends on the type of upper respiratory illness you have, its severity, and your exercise intensity. In the case of the common cold, moderate exercise is usually fine and doesn't influence the symptoms. In the case of the flu, most recommend no exercise until you are symptom-free for 7 days. That time frame gets extended to 14 days in the case of pneumonia, and in this case one's return to exercise ought to be medically approved, after getting blood work done.

But don't forget that intense exercise can temporarily suppress the immune system, and therefore during a disease-incubation period, could worsen the illness. So, if you feel like you may be getting sick, it's wise to reduce the intensity and duration of your exercise for several days.

## *Symptoms & Treatment*

**Symptoms:** fever, coughing, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headaches, body aches, chills and fatigue

**Get medical attention right away if you:**

- Have difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Experience pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Have sudden dizziness
- Become confused
- Have severe or persistent vomiting
- Experience flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough

**Common flu seasons are late fall through early spring**

**Treatment:** Since the flu is quite contagious and has the potential to be very dangerous, you should take proper precautions when diagnosed with it.

- You should stay home, follow your doctor's orders, and watch for signs that you might need medical attention
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Drink lots of fluids to keep you from becoming dehydrated
- Get plenty of rest.

## *What Is the Flu?*

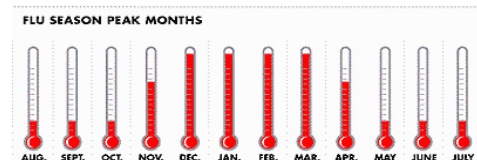
Your body's natural reaction to a virus is typically to build up a defense system by making antibodies so you don't get that particular virus strain. However, the common virus known as the flu has the ability to mutate annually, so protection from getting the flu can only last for about a year. The flu is defined by the United States Government as "illnesses caused by a number of different influenza viruses. Flu can cause a range of symptoms and effects, from mild to lethal." It is a highly contagious airborne virus that can also spread easily through direct contact. In a typical year, approximately 5 to 20 percent of the population gets the seasonal flu. Flu-related deaths range from 3,300 to 48,600, with an average of 23,600 deaths per year.

## *Preventing the Flu*

- Avoid being in face-to-face contact with someone who may have the flu or preliminary symptoms of the flu. If you cannot avoid being with the sick person, find a way to limit vulnerability; wearing a facemask or something that protects the nose and mouth are a great way.
- If you have had influenza before keep away from someone who has flu symptoms. You are more susceptible to the virus.
- When living in communities, at college, or somewhere else, make it a priority for yourself and those around you to wash your hands with soap and water regularly. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated against the flu as soon as the seasonal vaccine is available in your area.

## **Wellness Note:**

*Limited flu shots are still available at the Engle Center!*



For more information and to take the Flu IQ quiz, go to [www.flu.gov/individualfamily/about/index.html](http://www.flu.gov/individualfamily/about/index.html); Mišigoj-Duraković et al. (2005). *Kinesiology*, 37 (1)