



Take Steps to Stay Healthy This Cold and Flu Season

Cold and flu season is here, but there are steps you can take to prioritize your health and wellness. People with HIV may have a higher risk of complications from flu.

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This time of year, it can seem like everyone is starting to cough or sniffle. However, there are steps you can take to help protect yourself from respiratory viruses during cold and flu season. People with HIV can have a higher risk of complications from flu, so we're here to help you prepare to stay healthy and feel as well as possible.

Take the following actions to help prevent respiratory viruses:

- Prioritize your wellness. Eat [nutritious foods](#), drink lots of fluids, get plenty of sleep, get regular [exercise or physical activity](#), and manage your stress.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Try to physically distance yourself from others when possible in crowded places.
- Take steps for cleaner air. Bring in fresh air from outside, use an indoor air purifier, or move gatherings outdoors.
- Boost regular cleaning. Clean frequently touched surfaces such as countertops, handrails, and doorknobs more often.
- Increase handwashing. Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, then use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. When in public spaces, use cleaning wipes on shared services such as grocery carts and gas pump handles.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Touching these areas can increase the spread of germs.

Read more [tips from CDC for preventing respiratory illnesses](#).

If you do get sick, take these steps to protect yourself and others:

- Reach out to your provider early. People with HIV can have increased risk of severe flu illness. So, if you do get flu symptoms, call your health care provider right away so you can be treated with medications, if needed. Flu treatment works best when started within two days of getting sick, but starting it later can still be helpful.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Limit contact with others as much as possible to help prevent spreading your respiratory illness to them.
- Stay home. For flu, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your symptoms have started to improve and you have not had a fever without using fever-reducing medication.

Check out these other helpful resources about keeping yourself and others healthy if you do get sick:

- [Preventing Spread of Respiratory Viruses When You're Sick](#)
- [Flu: What To Do If You Get Sick](#)

There are lots of things to look forward to during the cooler months. Cozy time indoors with friends and family are worth protecting. Be proactive to protect your wellness during this cold and flu season, and all year 'round!

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