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## SENIOR HEALTH

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# Flu

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

### **WAYS TO AVOID THE FLU**

Stay away from people who are suffering from upper respiratory infections. Wash your hands often and keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth. Get plenty of rest. Eat nutritious, well-balanced meals and exercise regularly. If you're over the age of 65, have an immune disorder or are suffering from a chronic illness, such as emphysema, bronchitis, heart disease, anemia or diabetes, an influenza vaccine is strongly recommended. Flu shots are generally offered from September through November at your local hospital or clinic.

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### **FLU SYMPTOMS**

***dry cough***

***sore throat***

***hoarseness***

***runny nose***

***severe headache***

***general muscle aches or backache***

***extreme fatigue***

***loss of appetite***

***chills***

***fever***

***pain with eye movement, burning sensation in the eyes***

***chest pain***

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### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU BECOME ILL**

- Drink plenty of liquids.
- Get plenty of bed rest.
- Suck on lozenges for throat pain.
- Let yourself cough if you're bringing up mucus. Ask your pharmacist for an over-the-counter expectorant.
- Avoid dairy products (milk, cheese) for a couple of days. They may contribute to thick mucus which is harder to cough up.
- Wash your hands often.
- Take aspirin or acetaminophen for fever, aches and pains.

### **CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE:**

- a persistent high fever.
- swollen glands in your neck.
- a whitish coating on your tonsils or throat.
- any nasal discharge that becomes colored—yellow, greenish or bloody.
- persistent earache, cough or sinus pain.
- symptoms that get better, then take a turn for the worse.
- a severe headache with a stiff neck, fever, nausea and vomiting.
- flu that lasts more than one week.
- a skin rash.