

Health Awareness

What To Do About The Flu

(NAPS)—It's the peak of flu season, and while fortunately we are not experiencing the epidemic of last year, millions are still suffering from the flu this year. Although common, the flu can be serious and even lead to hospitalization or death. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that in the last seven years the flu has been responsible for more than 700,000 hospitalizations and more than 55,000 deaths across the United States.

Early identification of systems and subsequent treatment is key to making sure you limit the flu's severity. For those with pre-existing conditions like asthma, and especially for young children and the elderly, knowing the difference between a cold and the flu is very important.

Even if you've had the flu vaccination this year, it's still possible to catch the flu and pass it on to others.

Doctor's Advice

"Every year we find that patients have a tendency to underestimate the flu and forget what a serious health risk it presents, particularly for the very young and for seniors, but really for anyone when it is left unaddressed," explained Jason Tibbels, M.D., board-certified family physician and vice president of Health Services at Teladoc, the leader in virtual care. "Without proper care, the flu can be life threatening, so it's vital to seek care as soon as you're experiencing any symptoms."

The risk of flu varies state by state, but is currently widespread across most of the U.S., even in states that tend to have warmer climates, such as Texas, California and Florida, for example.

What To Watch For

So how do you know if you have the flu? Flu symptoms are often very similar to those of a cold and include nasal congestion, cough, aches and fatigue. Dr. Tibbels says the top four signs you may have the flu are:

1. Quick onset. The flu often comes on suddenly, whereas cold symptoms can slowly worsen over a few days and are generally milder.

2. Fever. A moderate to high fever



If you develop the nasal congestion, aches and fever of the flu, get a doctor's advice right away.

(at or above 101° F) and chills are associated with the flu and are not typical of the common cold.

3. Aches and headaches. Severe muscle or body aches are a telltale flu symptom.

4. Known exposure. Close contact with individuals known to have influenza can increase the chance of contracting the virus.

What To Do If You Have The Flu

If you're experiencing flu symptoms, don't wait to seek care. Fortunately in today's era of virtual care, many have access to board-certified doctors from any location, using a phone, mobile app or the Web. This keeps you out of places such as the ER, which can be breeding grounds for illness, and enables children and adults to stay in the comfort of their home when sick. Because it's symptomatic, the flu is one of the best conditions to diagnose via virtual care, yet many people don't even realize they can access a telehealth solution through their health benefits.

"If you are feeling sick, the last place you want to be is sitting in a crowded waiting room, potentially being exposed to other illnesses," said Dr. Tibbels. "Visiting a Teladoc doctor is an effective way to get quality care, while also containing symptoms and stopping the spread of flu."

Learn More

For further facts about Teladoc and about your flu risk, visit www.Teladoc.com/flu.