

## Facts about Stomach Flu, Common Cold and Influenza Disease

By Patsy Hamilton The influenza disease is an illness which affects the upper respiratory system. Influenza signs and symptoms can vary, but are often similar to the common cold, except that relatively high fevers are almost always present in cases of the flu, but rarely in adults who have a cold. Although most people recover quickly from the flu, there is a risk of developing complications in some people. The influenza disease is caused by infection with an influenza virus. The symptoms of the common cold can be caused by any of nearly 200 different viruses, including the rhinovirus, corona virus or influenza virus. The stomach flu is caused by an infection with the norovirus. Although the names are similar and people often refer to either condition as "the flu", influenza signs and symptoms (other than headache and fever) are quite different from those associated with the stomach flu. What is referred to as "cold and flu season" is not actually caused by changes in the weather, but by an increase in indoor activities and close contact among large groups of children and adults in school settings. If you have nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain, then you have probably been infected with a norovirus. Stomach flu is sometimes referred to as gastroenteritis or food poisoning, because the symptoms are the same. Stomach flu symptoms appear suddenly and usually last less than three days. Influenza signs and symptoms can last for as long as ten days, usually beginning with fever, body aches and chills and ending with cold-like symptoms (runny or stuffy nose, dry cough, sore throat, etc.) usually noticed after the other symptoms improve. Influenza disease, stomach flu and the common cold are all contagious diseases. The viruses can be transmitted from one person to another by close contact, touching contaminated surfaces or eating contaminated food. The ways to avoid these viruses include avoiding close contact with those who are obviously sick, washing hands after touching public surfaces and keeping the hands away from the mouth, nose and eyes. Antibiotics cannot kill any of these infections, as they are all viral infections. A visit to the doctor is usually unnecessary, unless fever is unusually high or prolonged or symptoms of bacterial infection or other complications occur. A cough that produces mucus may indicate bronchitis or pneumonia. Pain in the ears can indicate an ear infection. Severe headache, facial pain and pain in the teeth can indicate a sinus infection. Those people who are at high risk for developing complications from influenza disease should call their doctor within 48 hours of developing symptoms, as anti-viral medications are sometimes prescribed to shorten the duration and severity of influenza signs and symptoms in these people, as well as to reduce the chances of spreading the virus among these groups. Those people who are at high risk include people older than 50, nursing home and long-term care residents, people with heart problems, lung disease, diabetes, kidney problems, sickle cell disease and children who are on an aspirin therapy regimen and anyone who suffers from an impaired immune system, including those who are taking immuno-suppressive drugs. Women in their second or third trimester of pregnancy also have an increased risk of developing complications from the virus. Scientific research has shown that some vitamins, minerals, herbs and other natural products can be used to shorten the duration and severity of influenza signs and symptoms. These can also be taken safely as a regular health supplement to reduce the likelihood of developing [influenza disease](#) and other viral infections.

### About the Author

Patsy Hamilton has more than twenty years experience as a health care professional and currently writes informational articles for the Immune System Booster Guide. To learn more about natural products that boost the immune system or to learn about bird flu, pandemics, influenza and the common cold, please visit <http://www.immune-system-booster-guide.com>. Article Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Patsy\\_Hamilton](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Patsy_Hamilton)

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