

# Now is the time to learn all you can about flu, pneumococcal disease, and shingles.



## About Flu

Typically, flu season runs from late fall to early spring.

### Flu viruses can cause:

- fever (usually high)
- headache
- extreme tiredness
- dry cough

Flu can cause one or more of the symptoms listed above. People with H1N1 flu have also reported diarrhea and vomiting.

These viruses are spread mainly from person to person when an infected person coughs and sneezes. You may also get flu by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching your mouth or nose.

### To help prevent flu:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others.

## About Shingles

Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. Once you have had chickenpox, the virus stays in your body and can resurface as Shingles—a painful, blistering rash. The Shingles rash usually lasts up to 30 days, and for most, the pain lessens as the rash heals. But some people who develop Shingles experience long-term pain that can last for months, or even years.

Your chances of getting Shingles increase substantially as you age.

## About Pneumococcal Disease

You may have heard of pneumonia, which has many different causes. Infection with a certain bacterium called pneumococcus can be one of them. Infection with this bacterium can cause different types of diseases, which could affect the lungs, the lining of the brain, the spinal cord, and blood. Many adults carry the bacteria that cause pneumococcal disease in their nose and throat. In some cases, they may multiply and travel throughout your body, causing infections that can make you very sick. Pneumococcal disease can be very serious. It can lead to hospitalization and, in rare cases, may even cause death.

People in the following groups are at increased risk for pneumococcal diseases. Check the box(es) that apply to you:

- 65 years of age or older, OR
- 2 to 64 years of age with any of the following health problems:
  - Heart disease
  - Kidney disease
  - Diabetes
  - Whose spleen has been removed or does not work
  - Lung disease
  - Organ or bone marrow transplant
  - Certain types of cancer
  - Liver disease
  - Receiving medication or radiation treatment that affects the immune system
  - Alcoholism
  - HIV/AIDS
  - Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leaks (leakage of the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord).
  - Sickle cell disease (a certain blood disorder)

Ask your doctor if you are at increased risk for any of these diseases.