



# Let's **Beat** the Flu

## INFLUENZA FACT SHEET

### What is influenza?

Influenza (commonly known as “the flu”) is a serious respiratory infection that is caused by the influenza virus. The flu is spread easily through coughing, sneezing or through touching contaminated surfaces or objects like unwashed hands, toys and eating utensils. The flu can be prevented by getting the flu vaccine every year and by practicing good hand washing.

### What is the difference between the common cold and the flu?

Symptom	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare	Usually high fever (102°F/39°C - 104°C) Sudden onset, lasts 3-4 days
Headache	Rare	Usual, can be severe
Aches and pains	Sometimes, mild	Usual, often severe
Fatigue & Weakness	Sometimes, Mild	Usual, severe, may last 2-3 Weeks or more
Extreme Fatigue	Unusual	Usual early onset, can be Severe
Runny, Stuffy nose	Common	Common
Sneezing	Common	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Common
Chest Discomfort, Coughing	Sometimes, Mild to Moderate	Can become severe
Complications	Unusual	Pneumonia, respiratory Failure. Can be life-threatening

### Facts about the flu vaccine:

The vaccine is voluntary. It is safe and effective in preventing the flu. Although the vaccine contains part of the actual flu virus, the virus is dead and cannot give you the flu. The viruses that cause the flu change often, and because of this, flu vaccines are updated annually. People should be vaccinated to protect themselves, their families and their community.

### How well does the vaccine protect against the flu?

Protection from the vaccine develops in two weeks, and may last up to one year. The flu vaccine is about 70% to 90% effective in preventing influenza illness in healthy adults and children. In elderly people, the vaccine can prevent hospitalization for pneumonia in about 6 out of 10 people. Some people who receive the vaccine may still get the flu although the symptoms are usually milder. The flu vaccine does not prevent the common cold.

### Where do I get the influenza vaccine?

Influenza vaccine is available from your county health department and generally from your family physician. In addition, influenza clinics are sometimes offered at various workplaces. Check with your employer to find out if a flu clinic is being planned at your workplace.

Sandusky County Health Department will be offering influenza immunization clinics beginning in October and continuing through February or as long as supplies last. Watch the local newspaper for clinic details or call 419-334-6367 for information, or visit the SCHD web site at [www.sanduskycohd.org](http://www.sanduskycohd.org).