

The following table can help you determine whether you have a cold or the flu!

Signs and Symptoms	Common Cold	The Flu
Fever	Not usual	Usual, sudden onset 102-104 degrees. Can last 3-4 days
Headache	Not usual	Usual, can be severe
Aches and Pains	Sometimes mild	Usual, often severe
Fatigue and weakness	Sometimes mild	Usual, may last 2-3 weeks or more
Extreme fatigue	Not usual	Usual, early onset, can be severe
Runny, stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Common	Sometimes
Soar throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, coughing	Sometimes mild to moderate	Usual, can be severe
Complications	Can lead to sinus congestion or earache	Can lead to pneumonia and respiratory failure and cause more complications in dialysis patients
Prevention	Frequent hand washing	Annual Flu shot and frequent hand washing
Treatment	No specific treatment; symptom relief only	An anti-viral drug, which reduces severity and shortens the duration of symptoms if started within 2 days of becoming ill, is available by prescription from your doctor

Why Do I Need the Influenza Shot?

Flu Shot Facts for Dialysis Patients



Facts to help you fight the flu

What is the flu?

Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses.

It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

- 5-20% of the United States population gets the flu
- Approximately 36,000 people die from the flu

How does the flu spread?

The flu is spread by direct and indirect contact and by droplet contact.

The virus is easily spread from person to person via coughing, sneezing, and contact with dirty surfaces or items.



I am a dialysis patient, should I get the flu shot?

In general, anyone who wants to reduce their chances of getting the flu should get the flu shot.



As a dialysis patient, you are have an greater chance of having serious problems from the flu and are considered a priority group

When should I get flu shot?

October or November is the best time of year to get the shot, but you can still get your shot in December or later.



What are the side effects that could occur?

- Soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given.
- Fever (low grade)
- Aches



If these problems occur, they begin soon after the shot and usually last one to two days.

Does flu vaccine work right away?

No. It takes about two weeks after the shot for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against the virus. In the meantime, you are still at risk for getting the flu.

That's why it's better to get vaccinated early in the fall, before the flu season really gets under way

Can I get the flu from the flu shot?

NO. The flu shot **CANNOT** give you the flu.

The vaccine contains dead virus that cannot cause the flu in any way!