

Know The Stages of the Flu

Flu season is coming. Unfortunately, it overstays its welcome starting in October and leaving by May. If you're down with the flu, you may wonder, "How long will this last?!" Below, we share the stages of the flu so you can look forward to getting through each stage and feeling better!



Flu Day 0

This is when some people are actually contagious, yet feel fine. You can be out and about doing your normal activities without even knowing you're sick. You most likely contracted it from someone within the last 48 hours.



Flu Day 1

By day 1, the virus will hit you hard. You likely have woken up feeling fine, but as your day goes on, you may start feeling chills, body aches, and tiredness piling on. This is the best time to call your healthcare provider to get an antiviral drug.



Flu Day 2

You're probably spending all day in bed. Everything hurts and you're likely coughing, congested, and feeling achy all over. You're contagious, so be sure to stay home and away from loved ones as best as you can.



Flu Day 3

Today, you probably feel like you've been run over by a truck. Day three is what some say is the worst day of the flu when it comes to symptoms. Congestion, sore throat, and body aches are the most common symptoms at this time.



Flu Day 4

You may start feeling slightly better today. Your fever is likely gone, but you still need rest and lots of it. You may feel crummy again at the end of the day and you're still contagious, so stay home.



Flu Day 5

Things should be looking up. If a fever lingers or you're feeling a lot worse, call your doc. A secondary infection may have popped up — like bronchitis — which will require antibiotics.



Flu Day 6 and Beyond

Tiredness may feel like a constant companion, but you should be fever-free and breathing easier. As long as you haven't had to take medicine to nix a fever in the last 24 hours, you should be good to go back to work. Know that tiredness is normal and should resolve within a week or two.

When to Head to the ER

Between 2010 and 2020, between 140,000 – 810,000 individuals were hospitalized due to flu complications. If you experience any symptoms like labored breathing, bluish lips, unconsciousness, or extreme dizziness, call an ambulance or have someone drive you to the emergency room.