



*Advancing the Frontiers of the Pulmonary
Medicine in the Philippines.*

Philippine College of Chest Physicians

*A specialty society of the Philippine Medical Association (PMA)
A component society of the Philippine College of Physicians (PCP)
A member society of the Asian Pacific Society of Respiriology (APSR)
and the European Respiratory Society (ERS)*

Media Kit for Flu

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What is flu?

Flu is the commonly used name of Influenza. It is a contagious viral infection caused by Influenza A or B virus.

The flu virus infects the upper and lower respiratory tract such as the nose, throat and sometimes your lungs.

What is the difference between common cough and colds? And the flu?

Both are contagious viral infections of the respiratory tract. Symptoms may be similar, but the most common are, sore throat, nasal discharge, cough, and headache.

Flu differs from a cold as symptoms such as fever, sore throat, muscle aches and easy fatigability develop suddenly and may last about a week. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times, especially in the elderly, complications for flu can lead to life threatening pneumonia and bronchitis which require hospitalization. Sometimes these complications can lead to death.

How is flu transmitted?

It is spread from person to person through respiratory secretions.

The virus mainly spreads from person to person through the air by coughing, sneezing or talking. This can also spread by touching a contaminated person's hands, surface or object.

Who are at risk for flu?

Flu is highly contagious such that everybody, even the healthy individuals who are exposed to it, are at risk.

Since it is usually spread through large groups who spend time in close contact with others, settings such as schools, day care centers, nursing care and long-term health care

facilities, school age children, teachers, health care associates and providers may be at risk.

Smokers are at greater risk of getting the flu compared to non-smokers.

The elderly and immunocompromised patients are at risk of having pneumonia after getting the flu.

Healthy individuals who have contracted the flu virus may be absent at work/school and can transmit to others.

What will happen if one gets the flu? Complications? Expenses?

Patients who get the flu may be unable to conduct his regular activities of daily living and may be bed ridden for several days because of the constitutional symptoms that go with it. The most dreaded scenario would include complications of the flu leading to hospitalization, such as severe pneumonia, which usually affects the elderly and even death.

Getting the flu may have cost implications and may be expensive. There may be expenses for unexpected doctor's clinic or emergency room visits. In severe situations, where complications arise, hospitalization, antibiotics and measures to stabilize the other co-morbidities will impact on increased health care costs. There may also be increased expenses, in an indirect way, as when one has the flu, he or she may be absent from work for several days. This may affect both personal and company expenses.

Can flu be treated? Prevented?

Supportive and symptomatic treatment is the main approach in treating the flu. You give nasal decongestants and antipyretics such as paracetamol for symptom treatment. Bed rest and increased fluid intake are recommended for supportive treatment.

A yearly flu vaccination is still the best protection currently available against the flu.

Proper hand washing, cough etiquette and isolation of the sick are important in preventing its spread.

Who should get the vaccine?

Flu vaccination is recommended to patients 60 years old and above and patients above 6 years old with chronic conditions such as:

- lung disorders such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchiectasis
- smokers
- metabolic diseases
- diabetes mellitus and other endocrine disorders
- cardiac diseases
- liver diseases
- kidney diseases
- hematologic diseases
- brain, spinal cord injury or trauma, and epilepsy
- cancer and other conditions which would weaken the immune system

For immunocompetent patients, flu vaccine can be given if they want to prevent loss of work or school days during the flu season.

When is the best time to get the flu shot?

It is recommended in the Philippines to get flu shots before the rainy season which also marks the start of the flu season.

Why is the vaccine given every year?

It is given every year because the strain of the influenza virus continually changes and varies every year. So the vaccine manufactured every year is dependent on the influenza virus strain. Immunity provided by the vaccine does not last. It is therefore important that people at risk get vaccinated every year.

About National Lung Month

August of every year is lung month by virtue of proclamation no. 1761 s. 1978 proclaimed by Philippine President, Ferdinand E. Marcos. This decree was done in 1978 in recognition of the fact that lung diseases, especially pneumonia and tuberculosis, continue to exact a huge toll of precious lives among Filipinos, especially the low-income group. This declaration aimed to increase public awareness of these diseases.

About Philippine College of Chest Physicians

Established on April 25, 1973, the Philippine College of Chest Physicians (PCCP) is the premiere specialty organization acknowledged as the authority in pulmonary medicine in the Philippines. It sets the standards of excellence in the training and practice of pulmonary medicine in the Philippines.

PCCP is a value-centered specialty organization. It empowers its members, who are recognized and respected experts in the field, to constantly adapt and innovate to set the benchmark of excellence in the practice of pulmonary medicine in the Philippines. It is a body all around the country, comprised of 691 fellows, 91 diplomates, 9 honorary members and 322 associate members.

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