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## The Flu

Influenza, known as the flu, is caused by a virus that is easily passed from one person to another by coughing and sneezing. The flu often makes you feel sick with fever, cough, and sore muscles. Though people usually get better in about a week, for infants, the elderly, and people suffering from many medical problems, the flu can lead to more severe chest infections, and even death. In New York City, flu season usually begins in December, and can last into March or April, which is why the Ryan Network is offering **FREE flu shots to our patients!**

### Tips to stay healthy:

- Get a flu shot **every year**. The vaccine is the best way to protect yourself, but it only lasts for one season.
- The flu virus is spread easily from person to person. Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. It is best to use a tissue or the inside of your elbow, rather than your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, which decreases the chance that you will get the flu virus, or that you will pass the flu to others.
- Clean things that are touched often (doorknobs, light switches, phones, etc).

### What should you do if you have flu symptoms (fever, cough, etc.)?

- Rest in bed.
- Drink lots of fluids (water or juice).
- Stay home until your fever has subsided.
- Take non-aspirin pain relievers such as acetaminophen (Tylenol, panadol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin). Always check with your practitioner or pharmacist before taking a new medication.

### Come see your Ryan Network practitioner if:

- Your fever does not get better after 3-5 days.
- Your breathing is fast or difficult.
- There is yellow or green mucus with your cough.
- You are not able to drink enough fluids.
- You make less than the usual amount of urine or your urine is very dark.

### In addition, parents should also bring in an infant or child who:

- Still feels sick even after the fever is gone.
- Looks very sick or is very drowsy or fussy.
- Has a stiff neck, bad headache, severe sore throat, bad diarrhea or vomiting.
- Has a fever with a seizure.



*Free flu shots for Ryan Network patients 9 years or older on a walk-in basis! Please see registration for dates and times.*