



Prevention measures:

- Get vaccinated
- Wash your hands regularly and keep them away from your face
- Cough hygienically, e.g. into the crook of your arm, not into your hand
- Get well at home
- Be aware of the first signs
- Protect family members by avoiding physical contact
- Regularly air out closed rooms
- In the case of a pandemic: Keep your distance, avoid large gatherings of people, do not shake hands, know about hygiene masks (Source: RKI)

PATIENT INFORMATION

Handed out by:

Practice stamp

Please note that information regarding reimbursement is only valid for patients who are either members of German statutory or private health insurance.

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PATIENT INFORMATION

Influenza

More than just a cold!



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What is influenza?

Influenza is the "real" flu and is caused by influenza viruses. Typical symptoms include:

- a **sudden onset of illness** (within a few hours) with fever ($\geq 38.5^{\circ}\text{C}$)
- **dry, tickly cough**
- **sore throat**
- **muscle pain and/or headache**

Additionally, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea can also occur, as well as general weakness and sweating. The duration of the illness is usually one week.

Serious progression up to death can occur particularly in the **elderly** and **people with underlying conditions** (e.g. heart disease, diabetes mellitus etc.).

A **pregnancy**, particularly at an advanced stage, increases the risk of a serious progression.

Children can also get the flu. Effects can include cardiac insufficiency or encephalitis.

Vaccination

A well-tolerated flu vaccine which effectively protects against the disease has been available for many years. Local irritations at the injection site (redness, swelling, pressure pain) can arise for a few days and are a normal indication of a successful immune response. Tiredness and a slight rise in temperature are also possible side effects.

For children from 2 to 18 years of age there is a **nasal vaccine** available, which is used like a nasal spray.

With a proven severe allergy to chicken protein, you should not get vaccinated and speak to your doctor. During pregnancy, antibodies are passed on through vaccination to the unborn child. So the baby is protected in the first months of life.

The permanent vaccination commission (STIKO) recommends an influenza vaccination, which is reimbursed by health insurance companies (only in Germany) to the following people:

- Children, young people and adults with an underlying disease (e.g. metabolic disorder, heart disease, etc.)

- Pregnant women (especially from the 2nd trimester)
- People over 60 years of age
- Residents of retirement and nursing homes, medical personnel, care staff

Diagnostics

The clinical picture of flu is often clear for the diagnostic position and does not need to be clarified further by laboratory diagnostics.

With unclear progressions or with a threatening severe progression, direct detection of the virus from a nose/throat swab can be helpful.

An infection with influenza viruses must be reported to health authorities according to the Law on the Prevention of Infection.

Treatment

An uncomplicated influenza with no pre-existing underlying conditions can be treated symptomatically. Patients with underlying diseases and/or risk factors should visit their doctor when **the symptoms begin** (within the first 2 days) in order to introduce a possible antiviral therapy.

Damage to the respiratory system often leads to a secondary infection (superinfection with bacteria). This can exacerbate the progression of the illness. Then antibiotic therapy is necessary.

Please note: With a febrile viral infection in children and adolescents, acetylsalicylic acid (e.g. Aspirin®, ASS, Alka Selzer®, Godamed®, Acesal®) must NOT be administered!