CDC Says "Take 3" Actions To Fight Flu

#1 TAKE TIME TO GET A FLU VACCINE.

- CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu and its potentially serious complications.
- While there are many different flu viruses, flu vaccines protect against the viruses that research suggests will be most common.
- Flu vaccination has been shown to:
  - Reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, and missed work and school due to flu.
  - Reduce the risk of flu-associated hospitalization for children, working age adults, and older adults.
  - Prevent serious medical events associated with some chronic conditions.
  - Protect women during and after pregnancy and protect their babies from flu after birth for several months.
  - Be lifesaving in children.
- Flu vaccination has been shown in several studies to reduce severity of illness in people who get vaccinated but still get sick.
- Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, including those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, older people, and people with certain chronic health conditions.
- Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine annually by the end of October.

#2 TAKE EVERYDAY PREVENTIVE ACTIONS TO HELP REDUCE THE SPREAD OF GERMS.

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu symptoms, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever reducing medicine.
- While sick, limit your contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like flu.

#3 TAKE FLU ANTIVIRAL DRUGS IF YOUR DOCTOR PRESCRIBES THEM.

- If you get sick with flu, antiviral drugs can be used to treat your illness.
- Antiviral drugs are different from antibiotics. They are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) and are not available over-the-counter.
- Antiviral drugs can make illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications. For people with high risk factors, treatment with an antiviral drug can mean the difference between having a milder illness versus a very serious illness that could result in a hospital stay.
- CDC recommends prompt treatment for people who have influenza infection or suspected influenza infection and who are at high risk of serious flu complications.
- Studies show that flu antiviral drugs work best for treatment when they are started within 2 days of getting sick, but starting them later can still be helpful, especially if the sick person has a high risk factor or is very sick from the flu. Follow your doctor's instructions for taking this drug.

FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

fever* or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscles and body aches, headache, fatigue, sometimes diarrhea and vomiting.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/flu or call 800-CDC-INFO