



# Epi Watch

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## Spotlight On: Influenza

### What is Influenza (flu)?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccination each year.

### What are the symptoms of Flu?

Symptoms of flu include:

- fever (usually high)
- headache
- extreme tiredness
- dry cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle aches

Stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, also can occur but are more common in children than adults

### Who is at risk?

Everyone is at risk for the flu. Some people, such as older

people, young children, and people with certain health conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), are at high risk for serious flu complications.

### Can there be other complications from the flu?

Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes.

### How is the flu spread?

Flu viruses spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Most healthy adults may be able to



infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 days after becoming sick.

That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

### How can I prevent getting the flu?

When possible, the best protection against the flu is to get vaccinated. However, we recommend these additional habits for good health.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. Use an alcohol-based hand cleaner when you cannot wash your hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick as much as possible.
- If you get the flu, stay home to avoid spreading it.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, as germs can enter your system this way.



**TULSA HEALTH**  
DEPARTMENT

### Special Points of Interest

The Tulsa Health Department offers free Influenza (Flu) vaccines during the Flu season.

Visit our website at: [www.tulsa-health.org](http://www.tulsa-health.org) or call 582-9355 for clinic hours and locations.

## TIPS: Cold vs. Flu

The flu and the common cold are both respiratory illnesses but they are caused by different viruses. Because these two types of illnesses have similar flu-like symptoms, it can be difficult to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. Differences between a cold and the flu are as follows:

- The flu is worse than the common cold; colds are usually milder than the flu.
- Flu symptoms include fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, and dry cough which are more common and intense.
- People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose.
- Colds generally do not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations.
- Every year individuals may be vaccinated against the flu; individuals are not vaccinated against the common cold.

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## CURRENT NEWS

In December 2007, the World Health Organization reported two new countries with confirmed human cases of Avian influenza virus A (H5N1). The first country that reported a case was Myanmar and was in a 7 year old female. who has since recovered. The second country was Pakistan where a 25 year old male died from the disease. There have been 348 reported human cases of avian influenza with 216 deaths since January 2003. Avian influenza is an infection caused by avian (bird) influenza (flu) viruses. These influenza viruses occur naturally among birds. Symptoms of avian influenza in humans have ranged from typical human influenza-like symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, sore throat, and muscle aches) to eye infections, pneumonia, severe respiratory diseases (such as acute respiratory distress), and other severe and life-threatening complications.

The Tulsa Health Department collects Emergency Room chief complaint data to monitor the emergence of illnesses, such as influenza, in our community. For additional information on THD's county-wide surveillance system please [click here](#)

## REPORTED CASES OF SELECTED DISEASES

Disease	Tulsa County		Oklahoma	
	Cases Reported Year-to-Date 2007	Cases Reported Year-to-Date 2006	Cases Reported Year-to-Date 2007	Cases Reported Year-to-Date 2006
<i>Campylobacter</i>	41	42	487	406
<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7	4	6	17	37
<i>Giardia</i>	20	23	141	167
Hepatitis A	3	4	13	11
Hepatitis B	88	55	226	149
Hepatitis C	347	360	1927	1864
Rabies (Animal)	1	2	79	68
Salmonella	69	79	654	605
Shigella	50	17	132	195

Discrepancies between state and county numbers may result from cases being reported directly to the county. Also, Tulsa County totals for Hepatitis B includes perinatal cases.

## Surveillance Report

