



# Health and Welfare Alert

## Preventing Flu and Pneumonia

### Seasonal Influenza

Seasonal influenza, also known as the flu, is a viral illness that causes fever, tiredness, cough, sore throat, nasal congestion, body aches, and headaches. It is usually spread from person to person by coughing and sneezing.

Most people who get the flu usually recover in one to two weeks, but the flu can be deadly. An estimated 300,000 people are hospitalized with the flu each year in the United States.

Ohioans with developmental disabilities may be at high risk for the flu due to chronic lung conditions like asthma, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis. Risk of aspiration may be increased due to difficulty swallowing, gastro esophageal reflux disease, seizure disorder, tube feeding, cerebral palsy, and suppressed or absent cough or sneeze reflex.



### Prevention Tips

- Stay home when sick
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Wash hands often
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth
- Get enough sleep
- Exercise and avoid stress
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid close contact with sick people

### Fast Facts

**1,049**

Ohioans with developmental disabilities were hospitalized for pneumonia and flu in 2018. Such hospitalizations made up 17% of all unanticipated hospitalizations major unusual incidents (6,014) that year.

**2x**

Ohioans with developmental disabilities were twice as likely to be admitted to the hospital for the flu in 2017 than people without disabilities.

Source: DODD Incident Tracking System

### Get a Flu Shot

Flu vaccines are designed to protect against the influenza viruses that experts predict will be the most common during the upcoming season.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that people get their flu shots before the end of October. However, getting a late flu shot can be better than not getting one at all.



# Signs of Pneumonia

Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs that can cause mild to severe illness. Older adults and people with other respiratory illnesses are at a higher risk for pneumonia.

Common signs of pneumonia include cough, fever, trouble breathing, fast heartbeat, shaking, or chills.

Call a doctor or get assistance immediately if a person is experiencing signs of pneumonia.

Ohioans with developmental disabilities have a greater risk of being admitted to the hospital for the flu if they are **male, children, or seniors**

Family members and caregivers also need to get flu shots to help protect people with increased risk for severe illness and complications from the flu.

# Winter Weather Considerations



## Hypothermia

Hypothermia is when the body loses too much heat and can't work properly.

### Signs

Cold feet and hands. Pale skin. Severe shivering. Slurred speech. Dizziness. Trouble staying balanced. Slow pulse.

### Treatment

Call 9-1-1. Remove any wet clothing. Don't use direct heat to warm person. Don't rub or massage person.



## Frost Bite

Frostbite is when the skin freezes. It often affects fingers, toes, and exposed skin, like the face, nose, and ears.

### Signs

Gray, white, or yellow skin. Skin that looks waxy. Numbness.

### Treatment

Call 9-1-1. Warm area slowly. Don't rub person's frostbitten skin.

## Heater Safety

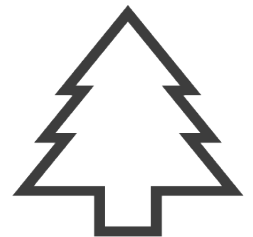
Space heaters that are not working properly or get knocked over can cause fire and death.



The National Fire Protection Association reports space heaters account for 43 percent of U.S. home heating fires and 85 percent of associated deaths. December, January, and February are leading months for home heating fires. Be alert when using space heaters.

## Outside Safety

Ensure people are well supervised when going outdoors to avoid exposure to extreme temperatures. Take extra clothing, blankets, and warm liquids on outings. Remember hats, gloves, scarves, and heavy coats in cold weather.



Pay attention to icy walks to decrease risk of falling.