

# Health Bulletin

## Avoiding The “Sick Cycle”

(NAPSA)—The flu is nothing to sneeze at. Affecting more than 40 million Americans, the flu can be more than just a nuisance, putting even healthy people out of commission for a week or longer. The spread of flu in close quarters such as a household, school or workplace can lead to a “sick cycle” that can last for weeks, even months.

That’s why Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines emphasize three tips:

1. get a vaccination
2. take prescription antiviral medication
3. practice good hygiene.

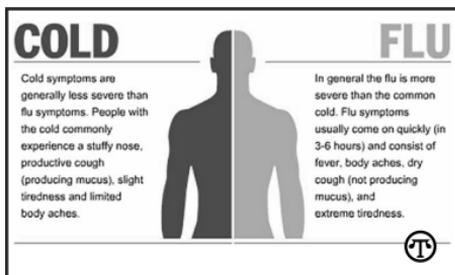
Dr. Donald Perlman, family health and flu expert at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center and Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, explains how easy it can be to break the flu “sick cycle.”

### Vaccination

The first line of defense against the flu is vaccination. It’s never too late in the season to get vaccinated. Visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for a vaccine clinic nearby.

### Prescription Medication: Don’t Take the Flu Lying Down

If someone does get the flu, he or she doesn’t have to suffer. Medications called antivirals are available with a doctor’s prescription. If taken in the first 12 to 48 hours of feeling sick, the medications treat



the flu and help you get better sooner.

The CDC recommends two antivirals—Tamiflu (oseltamivir) and Relenza (zanamivir). Tamiflu is available in pill or liquid suspension. Relenza is inhaled.

Doctors can also prescribe an antiviral to someone who has been exposed to the flu. When administered within 48 hours of exposure, Tamiflu is up to 92 percent effective at preventing flu in adults and 82 percent effective in children. In other words, when one person in the house gets the flu, medications can actually help stop everyone else from getting it.

### Good Hygiene

To keep the flu at bay and limit the spread of germs:

- wash hands frequently
- cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing
- avoid sharing drinks, silverware and mobile phones.

For more information on avoiding the flu “sick cycle,” visit [www.flufacts.com](http://www.flufacts.com).