

Seasonal influenza, commonly known as the flu, is a contagious viral infection that re-emerges each year during the colder months. Caused by influenza viruses, the flu spreads through respiratory droplets when infected individuals cough, sneeze, or talk. Symptoms may include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, and fatigue.

While most cases of seasonal influenza are mild and resolve on their own, the flu can lead to severe complications, especially in vulnerable populations such as young children, elderly individuals, pregnant women, and those with underlying health conditions. Each year, the flu causes millions of illnesses, hospitalisations, and, unfortunately, even deaths worldwide.

Vaccination remains the most effective method to prevent the flu and its potentially severe consequences. The Public Health Agency recommend annual flu vaccination, which helps protect individuals and contributes to community immunity, reducing the overall burden of the disease.

Apart from vaccination, practicing good hygiene, such as handwashing and avoiding close contact with sick individuals, can help reduce the risk of contracting and spreading the flu. As the flu virus can change from year to year, ongoing surveillance plays a vital role in updating vaccines and informing public health strategies.

During the flu season, it is essential to stay vigilant, recognise symptoms, and seek medical advice when necessary. By taking proactive measures, we can collectively combat seasonal influenza and protect our communities' health and well-being.

Further information on flu can be found on [NI Direct](#)

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