I have the flu. Is there anything I can take for it?

December 4, 2018 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

Yes. First, confirm that you have the flu, which is a respiratory illness that usually comes on quickly. Typically, there is a cough, body aches, headache, exhaustion, chills and fever. You may also have a sore throat and runny or stuffy nose. If you have a regular doctor, call the office to discuss your symptoms. Some health insurance plans offer free advice nurse assistance.

Antiviral medications are recommended for people who are at high risk of complications from the flu. These drugs will reduce the severity of the symptoms and shorten the duration of the flu. These are most effective when administered early in the illness. Some risk factors for complications are asthma, cancer, HIV, pregnancy, and over age 65.

Although you can't cure the flu, you can get relief by treating the symptoms. Rest, drink lots of fluids and take acetaminophen for a fever. If you have a cough, sore throat or stuffy nose, take over-the-counter remedies that best address your symptoms. Avoid people, but if you must go out, wear a mask and wash your hands frequently.

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