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# Flu (influenza): prevention & risks

## HOW THE FLU SPREADS

The flu is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs. It is caused mainly by 2 types of viruses:

- Influenza A
- Influenza B

The flu spreads very easily from person to person. Even before you notice symptoms, you may spread the virus to others. If you have the virus, you can spread it by:

- talking
- sneezing
- coughing

These actions release tiny droplets that contain the flu virus into the air.

You can become infected if these droplets land on your:

- eyes
- nose
- mouth

Infection can also happen if you touch any of these body parts after touching surfaces contaminated by infected droplets. Frequently touched surfaces and objects include:

- toys
- toilets
- phones
- door handles
- bedside tables

- television remotes
- electronics and tablets

In addition to getting the flu shot, you can also protect yourself and those around you from the flu and COVID-19 by:

- not touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- washing your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds
  - if soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
- coughing and sneezing into the bend of your arm, not into your hand
- cleaning and disinfecting surfaces that a lot of people touch, such as:
  - phones
  - doorknobs
  - television remotes
- staying home if you are sick
  - if you start to develop symptoms, isolate yourself from others and contact your health care provider or local public health authority

## WHEN THE FLU IS A RISK

In Canada your risk of getting the flu is higher in the:

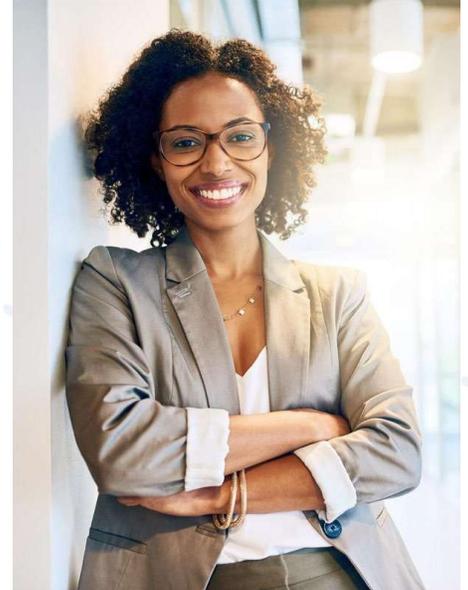
- late fall
- winter

Your risk is lower the rest of the year.

## Becoming a Resilient Employee

**During the COVID-19 pandemic**, have you coped with stress by thinking, “I am going to see this as a challenge” or “Is there opportunity to grow in this situation?” These responses to adversity represent resilience thinking. Many books about resiliency are authored by those who have faced difficult challenges—from disabled persons to the Navy Seals. Their commonality is a decision to not surrender. Develop resiliency by discovering what motivates you to get excited about the future. Fight negative self-talk regarding your ability to succeed. Practice work-life balance and self-nurturing behaviours for their powerful benefits. And when you face changes, focus physically and emotionally on what you can control. Resiliency skills aren’t pulled from a drawer when they are needed. They are everyday skills you use to solve problems correctly, take action on your goals, and develop reflexes to look for the opportunity in challenges you experience.

**Learn more at** [www.canada.ca/en/public-health/corporate/publications/chief-public-health-officer-reports-state-public-health-canada/from-risk-resilience-equity-approach-covid-19.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/corporate/publications/chief-public-health-officer-reports-state-public-health-canada/from-risk-resilience-equity-approach-covid-19.html)



## Workaholic: Myths That Mess with Mental Health

**Workaholics often have habits of thinking that can pose secondary consequences for their own health.** “Not deserving a rest” until a certain amount of work is accomplished is one such behaviour. Basing one’s personal worth on the amount of work that gets done is another. Paying more attention to work failures while minimizing the significance of successes, or defending their work practices with retorts like “no one ever died from working too hard” rounds out our examples here. Unfortunately, research shows that workaholics will have health problems and die sooner because of how work interferes with health, including results such as erratic sleep, poor nutrition, a lack of work-life balance, loneliness, substance abuse, depression, neglect of exercise (or not enough of the right kind of exercise), and neglecting important health decisions such as annual physicals, examinations, lab tests, and perhaps vaccines.

Some workaholics may experience the inability to relax without feeling physically ill, anxious, and agitated if they aren’t working. This prevents them from taking vacations, and often induces them to come to work sick, which is a form of presenteeism. If you are aware of any of these behaviours, it’s time to learn more; and if making healthy changes is difficult, talk to a professional counsellor, EAP, or life coach to help you discover a better work-life balance. Start with the 20 questions quiz offered by the 12-step program Workaholics Anonymous. The promise of stopping workaholic behaviour is, ironically, increased productivity; improved relationships at work and home; stronger feelings of accomplishment in more aspects of your life; and possibly a longer life.

**Source/Take the quiz here:**

[www.healthyplace.com/addictions/work-addiction/workaholic-quiz-am-i-a-workaholic](http://www.healthyplace.com/addictions/work-addiction/workaholic-quiz-am-i-a-workaholic)