



# Ministry of Health & Human Services

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## MHHS Reports Increase in Respiratory Illnesses (Flu, Cold, COVID)

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The Ministry of Health & Human Services (MHHS) would like to inform the public that an increase in flu, cold, and COVID cases has been observed in the community and at the Belau National Hospital. Complications from these common seasonal infections have resulted in severe illness and hospitalization, especially in people with weak immune systems.

### What are these respiratory illnesses?

Respiratory illnesses include the Influenza (flu), colds, or COVID, caused by viruses that is spread via coughs, sneezes, and physical contact from somebody who is sick. Illness is typically mild, but can be severe in higher risk groups which include, the elderly, children, and those with weak immune systems.

### What are the symptoms?

#### Influenza (Flu)

- Fever (not everyone with flu will have a fever)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Tiredness
- Some may have diarrhea and vomiting

#### Cold

- Sneezing
- Stuffy nose
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Coughing
- Mucus dripping down your throat (post-nasal drip)
- Watery eyes
- Fever (most people with colds do not have fever)

#### COVID-19

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

### How to prevent getting sick?

The most important thing you can do to prevent becoming infected or spreading the virus includes getting your flu or COVID-19 vaccines. Avoid others when sick, cover your coughs and sneezes, wash your hands often with soap and water or hand sanitizer, clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces, and wear masks when appropriate.

### What to do if you get sick?

Most people with flu or cold have mild illnesses. In most cases, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people. However, for people with weak immune systems (children, elderly, people with chronic illnesses), may develop complications such as pneumonia, sinus or ear infections, worsening of chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease.

If you or a family member is sick, in a high-risk group, or worried, contact your doctor or a healthcare provider for advice. You may call the BNH OPD at 488-2555 during working hours, or the ER after hours at 488-2558.