Avoiding a Viral Illness

A viral respiratory infection often comes on suddenly and may linger for several days. Here are some key facts to know:

- ▶ The time between being infected with a respiratory illness and showing symptoms may vary. Common symptoms include fever, chills, cough, sore throat, runny nose, headache, body ache, and fatigue. People with chronic health conditions (such as asthma or heart disease) may be more susceptible to a respiratory illness or may have more severe symptoms because of the underlying condition.

- ▶ People with a contagious virus should stay home until their fever has been gone for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. In some instances, local health departments may recommend a longer quarantine period based on the type of illness that is prevalent in the community.

- ▶ Viral illnesses are primarily spread by human contact. To minimize your risk of infection:

  - Wash your hands with soap and hot water often, but particularly when you are cooking, eating, touching another person, or handling objects others have touched. When hand washing is not an option, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, especially if you haven't been able to wash your hands recently.

  - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of the tissue afterwards.

  - Frequently disinfect tables, counters, doorknobs, sinks, and other surfaces with a bleach-based solution.

  - If you are sick, limit your contact with others. Sleep separately from a healthy spouse or partner, use different towels, and avoid sharing eating utensils.

  - If you are concerned about your symptoms, contact your physician.

- ▶ A flu shot will decrease your risk of contracting some common viruses or minimize their effects. Flu vaccines are recommended for everyone six months of age and older.

Source: cdc.gov

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