



**Medical
Blueprints**

PROTECT YOUR KIDS FROM COVID THIS FLU SEASON REPORT #2798

BACKGROUND: The flu, or influenza, is a contagious respiratory illness caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. The flu spreads mostly from person to person, and people with the flu are most contagious in the first three to four days after their illness begins. Flu viruses travel through the air in droplets when someone with the infection coughs, sneezes, or talks. You can inhale the droplets directly, or you can pick up the germs from an object and then transfer them to your eyes, nose, or mouth. Early symptoms can include fatigue, body aches and chills, cough, sore throat, and fever. For most people, influenza resolves on its own, but sometimes its complications, can be deadly.

(Source: <https://www.healthline.com/health/influenza/facts-and-statistics>)

COVID AND FLU: This will be the first time for a flu season during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some have always taken flu season seriously, getting vaccinated as soon as the flu shot becomes available. But, with a new virus in the mix, should our approach change? The CDC estimates that the 2019-2020 U.S. flu season caused 410,000 hospitalizations and 18 million medical visits. "While the flu vaccine isn't 100% effective, evidence shows that the vaccine is really good at preventing flu-related hospitalizations, which is important every year, but will be especially important this year with the COVID-19 pandemic still going on," said Wesley Long, MD, director of diagnostic microbiology at Houston Methodist. Some people may be worried that getting a flu shot may make you more susceptible to catching another illness, such as COVID-19. "The flu vaccine and your immune system don't work that way," says Dr. Long. "It's completely safe to get a flu vaccine during this pandemic. In fact, it's one of the best things you can do for your health."

(Source: <https://www.houstonmethodist.org/blog/articles/2020/sep/should-covid-19-change-how-you-approach-this-years-flu-season/>)

FLU DRUG IN COVID TRIALS: While the drug, remdesivir, is intended for reducing recovery time in the most severe COVID cases, U.S. doctors are also testing an influenza drug made by a Japanese photography company with hopes that it may help a wider range of patients. Favipiravir works by preventing the virus from replicating in cells. Fujifilm began a phase 2 clinical trial in Massachusetts which called for about 50 patients and is taking place in collaboration with Brigham and Women's Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital and the University of Massachusetts Medical School. "We expect the drug will enhance clearance of virus and shorten the duration of COVID-19 illness," says Robert Finberg, chair of the school's Department of Medicine. Health centers in China and Japan have been studying favipiravir as a COVID-19 treatment for months. It also has been tested in Italy, and a trial is set to begin in India. In one clinical trial in China, patients taking the drug tested negative for coronavirus after a median of four days, less than half the 11 days it took for patients in a control group. While noting an apparent lack of drug resistance with favipiravir, researchers said it should not be given to pregnant women due to its negative effects on animal embryos.

(Source: <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/05/04/fujifilms-flu-drug-favipiravir-sent-to-43-nations-for-covid-19-trials.html>)

✉ **For More Information, Contact:**

Margot Winick, Public Relations Program Manager – Florida
Nemours Children's Health System
margot.winick@nemours.org

Free weekly e-mail on Medical Breakthroughs from Ivanhoe. To sign up: <http://www.ivanhoe.com/ftk>