

Decision assistant

Protecting your health and the health of others

The flu is a respiratory infection that is spread easily. It is caused by the influenza virus. In Québec, it mostly spreads during the end of the fall to the beginning of the spring. Flu symptoms, which appear suddenly, and their severity, can vary depending on age and health condition.

The main symptoms are the following:

- Sudden fever between 39 °C and 40 °C (102 °F and 104 °F)
- Sudden cough
- Sore throat
- Muscle or joint pain
- Extreme fatigue
- Headache

Symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain may also be experienced. These symptoms are most common in children.

The Flu is often confused with other respiratory infections such as the cold.

Certain protection and cleanliness measures can also help prevent transmission of the flu:

- Wash your hands often
- Keep your immediate environment clean, such as furniture surfaces and counters
- Cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow

IF YOU HAVE FLU SYMPTOMS,

the following table will help you decide what is best for you and your family

ADULTS OR CHILDREN

I don't have a fever (less than 39 °C or 102 °F), but I do have the following symptoms:

- Blocked nose
- Runny nose
- Cough

DECISION

I probably have a cold and need to rest.

ADULTS OR CHILDREN

I have a sudden fever (higher than 39 °C or 102 °F) as well as the following symptoms:

- Sudden cough
- Sore throat
- Muscle or joint pain
- Extreme fatigue
- Headache

DECISION

I probably have the flu. I can treat myself at home. I can get information at [Québec.ca](http://Quebec.ca). If need be, I can call **Info-Santé 811**.

ADULTS OR CHILDREN AT RISK FOR COMPLICATIONS

I have flu symptoms and belong to the category of individuals at risk for complications (babies younger than 6 months old, people aged 75 and over, healthy pregnant women in the 2nd and 3rd trimesters of their pregnancy, people with chronic disease).

DECISION

I need to call **Info-Santé 811**. A nurse will assess my condition and recommend steps to be taken, depending on my condition.

ADULTS OR CHILDREN

II have flu symptoms and one of the following applies to me:

- Increasing or persistent pain when I breathe
- A rising fever or one that has lasted for more than 5 days
- Symptoms that deteriorate or do not improve after 7 days

DECISION

I must see a doctor today.

ADULTS OR CHILDREN

I have one or more of the following apply to me:

- Breathing difficulty that persists or worsens
- Blue lips
- Intense chest pain
- Intense headache that persists or worsens
- Drowsiness, difficulty staying awake, weakness
- Confusion, disorientation
- Seizures (body stiffens and muscles contract in a jerky and involuntary manner)
- No urination for 12 hours, excessive thirst
- Fever in a child who appears very sick, lacks energy and refuses to play
- Fever in a baby less than 3 months old

DECISION

I must go to the emergency department of a hospital immediately. If I require assistance, call **9-1-1**.

GASTROENTERITIS

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Gastroenteritis can be caused by a virus, a bacteria or a parasite.

The main symptoms of gastroenteritis are:

- Diarrhea: at least 3 liquid or semi-liquid stools every 24 hours or stool that is more abundant and frequent than usual
- Abdominal cramps
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Mild fever (in some cases)

Symptoms of gastroenteritis usually last 24 to 72 hours. Persons with gastroenteritis are usually contagious when showing symptoms, and most particularly so when symptoms are severe.

They may be contagious even a few weeks after symptoms have subsided.

The following hygienic and preventive measures can help ensure that others are not infected by your gastroenteritis:

- Wash your hands often
- Disinfect toilet seat and all surfaces or objects likely to be infected by stool or vomit

IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS OF GASTROENTERITIS, the following table will help you decide what is best for you and your family. If it is traveller's diarrhea, contact Info-Santé 811.

ADULTS OR CHILDREN

I have diarrhea but no other symptoms associated with gastroenteritis, and my general state of health is good.

DECISION

I probably have a temporary intestinal disorder.

A balanced diet should get rid of the symptoms.

If need be, I can call **Info-Santé 811**

ADULTS OR CHILDREN

I have had diarrhea : at least 3 liquid or semi-liquid stools every 24 hours or stool that is more abundant and frequent than usual :

- Abdominal cramps
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Mild fever (in some cases)

DECISION

I probably have viral gastroenteritis that will last between 24 and 72 hours.

I can treat myself at home.

I can get information at **Québec.ca**.

If need be, I can call **Info-Santé 811**.

ADULTS OR CHILDREN AT RISK FOR COMPLICATIONS

I have symptoms of gastroenteritis and belong to a category of people at risk for complications (children under 2 years of age, adults 65 and over, pregnant women, persons suffering from a chronic disease).

DECISION

I need to call Info-Santé 811.

A nurse will assess my condition and recommend steps to be taken, depending on my condition.

ADULTS OR CHILDREN

- I have had diarrhea for more than 48 hours, with no improvement.
- I have diarrhea and fever (over 38° C or 100.4° F) for over 48 hours.
- I have been vomiting for 48 hours, with no improvement.
- I have had diarrhea for more than 1 week.

DECISION

I must see a doctor today.

ADULTS OR CHILDREN

- I have a lot of bloody or black stools.
- I have diarrhea with intense abdominal pain.
- I have diarrhea, extreme thirst, have not urinated in 12 hours.
- I have been vomiting frequently, and it does not slow down after 4 to 6 hours.
- My vomit contains blood or stool (red in colour or ground coffee-like).
- My general health is deteriorating (weakness, drowsiness, irritability, confusion).

DECISION

I must go to the emergency department of a hospital immediately.

If I require assistance, call **9-1-1**.

Québec.ca

Québec 

The information in this publication is not meant to replace the advice of a health professional. If you have questions about your state of health, call **Info-Santé 811** or contact a health professional.