What is flu?

It's a virus. There are several viruses that are flu viruses, just as there are several makes and models of trucks that are “trucks.” All slightly different, but still trucks.

Each year, a new vaccine is created to match the particular strains of flu viruses that are floating around. If the vaccine doesn't match all of the main strains for that year, we'll see more people infected.
What does it feel like to have flu?

Flu symptoms appear quickly — there’s no buildup — and that’s a tip that you have flu and not a cold.

Not everyone has the same symptoms, but generally you’ll feel tired, your body will hurt, your throat will be sore, and you’ll have a headache. Many people also get a fever and some, usually children, may vomit.
How bad can it be?

A typical case of flu is over in a couple of weeks, although for some the infection can cause serious problems.

When flu is more severe, you might also get pneumonia or infections in the sinuses, ears, or bronchial tubes — these tubes are in the lungs, and they allow us to breathe. It is possible to die from complications of a flu infection, whether you're otherwise healthy, or you live with asthma, diabetes, or other chronic condition.
How is a person infected?

You get it from droplets an infected person puts into the air when they cough, sneeze, or talk. Those drops may get into your body through your nose, eyes, or mouth.

Or, the drops land on tabletops and other surfaces — you then touch the surface, getting the infected drops on your hand. You transfer the drops to the mucous membranes around your eyes, nose, or mouth.
How do we avoid infection?

First, talk to your doctor or healthcare provider about getting immunized against flu. Unless there’s a medical reason not to do so, everyone six months of age and older should get vaccinated.

Keep your hands clean throughout the day by washing with soap and water or, if necessary, by using hand sanitizer.

Stay away from those who are sick, and stay home if you’re ill.