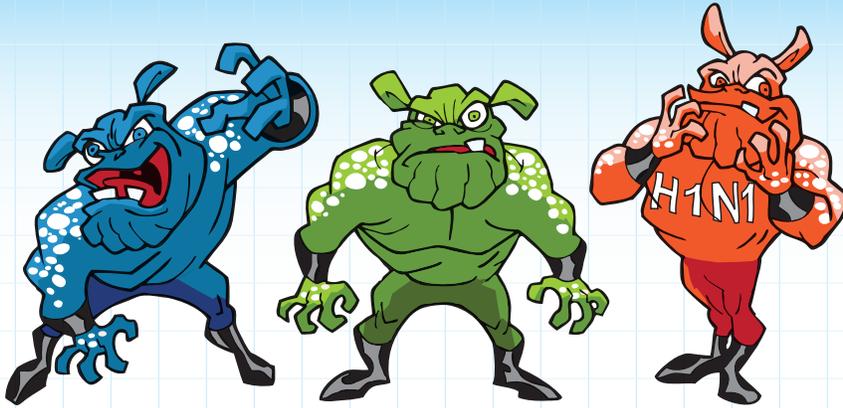


## >>> IMMUNE PLATOON DISEASE DATABASE <<<

CASE FILE: THE FLU KREW • REAL NAME: INFLUENZA • MICROBE TYPE: VIRUS



### PROFILE

Influenza viruses, AKA the “Flu Krew,” are viruses spread mainly by coughs and sneezes. If this enemy gets you, you may have symptoms like a fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, chills or tiredness. The Flu Krew usually affects people in the United States from October to May, and comes back every year.

Flu is a serious disease, particularly for people who have other health problems like diabetes or asthma. The members of the Flu Krew change a little bit each year. Scientists keep a close watch on the Flu Krew and develop a new vaccine each year to protect us from the flu.

### POWERS & ABILITIES

The Flu Krew’s three sinister tricks make it tough to combat.

1. Flu Krew can change each year, and outwit past vaccines.
2. It is contagious and can spread easily from person to person.
3. Infected people are contagious for about a day before they even know they’re sick.

Symptoms of the flu can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Tiredness
- Sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

These symptoms are usually referred to as “flu-like symptoms.” Sounds like a plain old cold, right? Wrong. The assault is sudden, and can be far more powerful than a cold.

The best way to fight the Flu Krew is to get vaccinated, but you can reduce the chances that the Flu Krew will get to you by staying away from people who are sick. By covering your coughs and sneezes, and washing your hands, you can reduce the chances of spreading the virus to other people. The greatest reasons to be concerned about the Flu Krew are:

- The Flu Krew can cause serious illness. Most people recover just fine. But sometimes the Flu Krew can cause serious illness and can cause people to go to a hospital, especially people with certain chronic diseases like diabetes, asthma, kidney disease or heart disease.

Each year, more than 200,000 people in the United States end up hospitalized because of the Flu Krew, and about 36,000 die. That’s why people should take the Flu Krew seriously.

- Now there is another thing to consider. A new and very different flu virus called 2009 H1N1 (sometimes called “swine flu”) is

### PREFERRED METHOD OF ATTACK

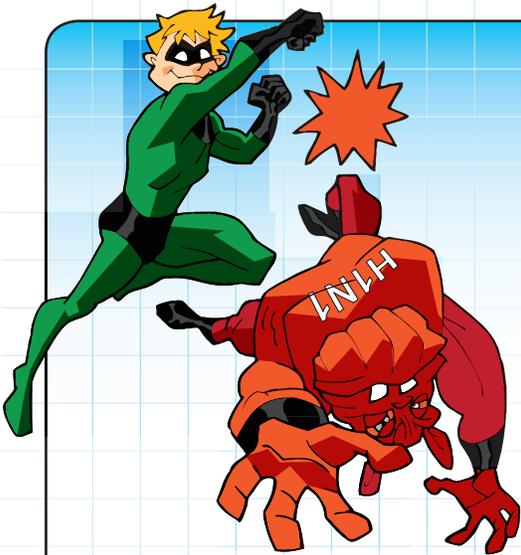
The Flu Krew is spread from person to person through coughs and sneezes. When someone else breathes in droplets released by those coughs or sneezes, they may unknowingly breathe in the virus.

The Krew also has other ways of getting around. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something – such as a surface or object – with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes.

causing illness—sometimes severe—in people all over the world.

The good news is that scientists have already created a new vaccine to protect against 2009 H1N1 flu. And kids are one of the groups recommended to go out and get it. If you have certain chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes, kidney disease or heart disease, it’s especially important that you protect yourself against this new member of the Flu crew.





### KNOWN WEAKNESSES

The flu vaccine is the best-known protection against this Flu Krew. It revs up and trains your own immune system to fight the Flu Krew strains that are expected that year. Scientists figure out which strains to put in the vaccine every year by collecting Flu Krew samples and predicting which types of Flu Krew will be most common.

For top-notch protection, people must get a new flu vaccine each year. This year, kids will need to get two flu vaccines: one for the usual Flu Krew and one for the new 2009 H1N1 flu virus.

Keeping this enemy in check requires real vigilance. Everyone must do what they can to prevent Flu Krew's spread. This means washing hands often, and covering up coughs and sneezes with tissues. If the Flu Krew does get you, and you have a certain chronic health condition like asthma, diabetes, kidney disease or heart disease, you should contact your doctor right away.

Your doctor may prescribe medicines called antivirals that can help you fight the flu.

If you are sick, stay at home. Don't go to school or spend time in close contact with other people until you don't have a fever for 24 hours. You should measure your temperature after you've stopped taking fever-reducing medicines, but do not take aspirin to reduce fever. If you have

flu, taking aspirin could cause another disease called Reye's syndrome.

If your symptoms get worse, you should contact your doctor.

Also remember, rest and medicine for coughs or runny and stuffy noses can help you feel better. Parents should not give children younger than 4 medicines for coughs/colds without talking to a doctor.

### PREFERRED VICTIMS

The Flu Krew can infect anybody, anywhere. There's no way to know exactly how many people have been infected because most get better without even going to the doctor, but each year up to 1 person out of 5 might get sick from the Flu Krew.

### PRECAUTIONS FOR THE PUBLIC

Our main weapon against the Flu Krew (vaccines) comes in two forms—a shot and a nasal (nose) spray. Neither the flu shot nor the nasal spray vaccine will make you sick.

Flu Krew season in the United States can start as early as October and last as late as May. It's best to get vaccinated as soon as the vaccine is available. But, the old saying "better late than never" is true—even late in the season, the vaccine can help protect you against the flu crew.

Remember, you can protect yourself and others by:

- Washing hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Covering up coughs and sneezes using a tissue, or your elbow if tissue is not available, instead of your hand.
- Not touching your mouth, nose, or eyes (which, is how germs spread).
- Steering clear of people who are sick from the Flu Krew.
- Staying home from school, and away from others as much as possible, if you've been attacked by the Flu Krew.

### CRIMINAL RECORD

The Flu Krew has an established track record of several frightening outbreaks and other devious behavior.

- A flu pandemic is a world wide outbreak of disease that occurs when a new flu virus—AKA, a new flu crew member—emerges and causes illness in people around the world.
- In the spring of 2009, a new Flu Krew member was discovered called "2009 H1N1 (sometimes called "swine flu"). 2009 H1N1 spreads easily from one person to another, just like other Flu Krew members.

However, 2009 H1N1 is different from other members of the Flu Krew who show up each year because 2009 H1N1 is a completely new flu virus in humans. As a result, people's Immune Platoons aren't familiar with fighting this newest member of the Flu Krew. Getting the 2009 H1N1 vaccine will help your Immune Platoon fight the 2009 H1N1 flu.

- The worst Flu Krew pandemic ever was the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, which killed tens of millions of people.
- Other Flu Krew members have caused pandemics in the past as well, including Asian Flu Krew (1957), and Hong Kong Flu Krew (1968); however, these Flu Krew members were not as dangerous as the 1918 Flu Krew.

