Did you ask about masks?
During periods of increased respiratory infection in a community—such as influenza outbreaks—use of face masks may help to reduce the spread of disease. Face masks are especially recommended for people who have flu-like symptoms, but healthy people may also want to consider wearing a mask as one way to avoid getting sick.
So, when to wear a mask?

It’s a good idea to wear a mask when you are seeking medical treatment for flu-like symptoms.

Let the receptionist or nurse know right away if you have flu-like symptoms such as cough, fever, difficulty breathing and muscle aches. You may be asked to wear a mask to avoid infecting others. If you already have a mask, put it on before you go out in public with flu-like symptoms.

Consider wearing a mask when others around you are sick.

If you are in close contact with or a designated caregiver of someone who is sick, wearing a mask may reduce your chance of becoming ill. It is even more important that the person who is sick wears a mask!

Masks may be especially helpful if there is an outbreak of flu in your community.

During periods of increased respiratory infection in the community such as a flu outbreak, masks may help reduce transmission of the infection from one person to another.
Where can you get a mask?

Masks are sold in pharmacies, medical supply stores or through the Internet.

Remember: mask use—all by itself—can’t prevent flu. But it will help stop the spread of germs if mask use is combined with good hygiene:

• Wash your hands often to help prevent illness. ALWAYS wash your hands immediately after you take off a mask. Use soap and water, if possible, or alcohol-based hand sanitizer if you are not near a sink.

• Don’t handle your mask and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth.

• Change your mask whenever it gets moist. Never wear a mask for longer than one day.
Keep your germs to yourself when you are not wearing a mask!

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw out the tissue in the nearest wastebasket and wash your hands.
- If you don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper arm—not your hands.
For more information, visit

www.nyhealth.gov or www.pandemicflu.gov