

Pandemic Influenza

Caring for a flu patient at home

How do I know if I have the flu?

If you have the flu, you will have a fever and some or all of these symptoms: body aches, muscle pain, fever and chills, headache, dry cough and runny nose.

Can I take care of family members at home?

Proper care of individuals with the flu should start at home. You should call your health care provider and/or 911 if symptoms are severe. When caring for patients with flu symptoms, follow these suggestions:

- 1) Reduce Fever
 - a. Drink plenty of fluids
 - b. Take fever-reducing medicines, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), aspirin or ibuprofen, following the dosing instructions on the label. Do not give aspirin to anyone under the age of 20.
 - c. Keep a log of temperature and time, and when any medicines were given.
 - d. Give a sponge bath with lukewarm water.
- 2) Prevent dehydration
 - a. Drink plenty of water and only eat foods that are easily digested, such as soup or broth
 - b. Drink fluids that contain electrolytes (sports drinks and pedialyte), or make your own by mixing: 1 quart water, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon table salt, 3 to 4 tablespoons sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt substitute. Mix well. Flavor with lemon juice or sugar-free Kool-Aid®.
- 3) Closely monitor symptoms
 - a. Keep a log to record the date, time, temperature, symptoms, and the medicines and amounts given.
 - b. Call your physician if you have any of these symptoms:
 - i. High fever

1. Children and adults:	Greater than 105
2. Babies 3 to 24 months:	Greater than 103
3. Babies under 3 mos:	Geater than 100.4
 - c. Shaking chills
 - d. Coughing that produces thick, dark-colored or bloody mucus
 - e. Dehydration, noted by dry mouth or excessive thirst
 - f. Extreme pain in the ear
 - g. Worsening of a pre-existing medical condition (diabetes, heart or lung disease, etc...)



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- h. Call 9-1-1 for any of the symptoms below
 - i. Irritability and/or confusion
 - ii. Difficulty breathing or chest pains
 - iii. Blue skin
 - iv. Stiff neck
 - v. Inability to move arm or neck
 - vi. First-time seizures

How can I prevent the spread of the flu?

When you cough or sneeze, tiny droplets that contain germs go from your mouth and nose to surfaces that other people touch. If you have the flu, this spreads the virus very quickly. Here are some steps to help reduce the spread of flu viruses.

- 1) Wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- 2) Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- 3) Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, and mouth to limit the amount of germs that enter your body.
- 4) Limit your contact with crowds of people who could possibly be sick. If you are sick avoid other people.
- 5) Avoid close, personal contact such as hugging, kissing, shaking hands, etc...
- 6) If you are sick, stay home from work or school.

Housekeeping tips when caring for someone at home.

When caring for someone that is sick, you can take steps to protect yourself.

- 1) Wear disposable gloves when handling body fluids
- 2) Keep everyone's personal items separate
- 3) Do not share food, drink, or eating utensils
- 4) Wash your hands after handling dirty laundry or personal items
- 5) Isolate the sick person in one room of the home if possible
- 6) One person should serve as caregiver and keep well family members away from those that are sick
- 7) Disinfect common surfaces that are in shared spaces such as door knobs, switches, toys, telephones, remotes, etc...
- 8) Use a disinfectant that kills germs or make your own by mixing $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of bleach with 1 gallon of water. Do not save the mixture because the bleach will weaken over time.



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