

New Flu A H1N1—Home Care Guidance #2

Interim Guidance for Caring for Someone with New Flu A H1N1 at Home

PLEASE NOTE: This is a rapidly evolving situation. This alert provides interim guidance. Guidance is likely to change in the upcoming days and weeks as more information becomes available.

The precautions recommended for seasonal flu apply to New Flu A H1N1—wash your hands, cover your cough, and stay home if you are sick.

YOU AND YOUR FAMILY SHOULD...

1. Stay home if you have flu-like symptoms like fever, fatigue, coughing, or sore throat. Stay home until 24 hours after fever ends.
2. Wash your hands often using soap and warm water for 20 seconds each time.
3. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
4. Get emergency medical care if these symptoms occur in children and adults:

CHILDREN

- If flu-like symptoms do not get better after a few days or become worse
- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish lips or skin color
- Dehydration; not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up, not interacting; Confusion, being disoriented
- Fever with a rash

ADULTS

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

5. Know that medicines (antivirals) used to treat and prevent the flu are not a “cure all” and should not be taken without the guidance of a healthcare provider.
6. Know the best way to avoid getting the flu **does not** include wearing a mask, or special cleaning procedures beyond normal processes. Instead, wash your hands, avoid touching your face, cover your cough, and stay home if you’re sick to keep others well.

IF PEOPLE IN YOUR HOME ARE SICK, HAVE THEM:

- Check with their health care provider to see if they should take antiviral medications and if they have special medical needs due to pregnancy, diabetes, heart disease, asthma, emphysema or other medical conditions.
- Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their sleeve.
- Clean hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid close contact with others, including not going to work or school.

MEDICINE TO HELP LESSEN FLU SYMPTOMS

- Most people don't need antiviral drugs to fully recover from the flu. Antiviral medicine can help lessen influenza symptoms, but require a prescription. Check with your doctor or pharmacist for safe and correct use of any medications.
- Over-the-counter cold and flu medications used according to package instructions may help lessen symptoms but will not lessen how infectious a person is.
 - Check ingredient labels on over-the-counter cold and flu medications to see if they contain aspirin. **Don't** use medications that contain aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to treat flu symptoms because it can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome. For more information about Reye's syndrome, visit the National Institute of Health website at http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/reyes_syndrome/reyes_syndrome.htm
 - Teenagers with the flu can take medicines *without* aspirin, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®), to relieve symptoms.
 - Children younger than 2 years of age should not be given over-the-counter cold medications without first speaking with a doctor.
 - The safest care for flu symptoms in children younger than 2 years of age is using a cool-mist humidifier and a suction bulb to help clear away mucus.
 - Fevers and aches can be treated with:
 - Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)
 - Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®)
 - Naproxen (Aleve®)

PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS WHO AREN'T SICK

- Keep the sick person away from others.
 - Separate individuals by 3-6 feet when possible
 - Let them use a separate room and bathroom if possible
 - Have them avoid common living areas
 - Have one person be the caregiver, make sure the caregiver is not a pregnant woman
 - Avoid having visitors
 - Arrange beds so that individuals lay head to toe relative to each other
 - In larger rooms, create temporary physical barriers between beds using sheets or curtains
- Have everyone clean their hands often, using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid sharing personal hygiene items like toothbrushes and towels.
- Unless necessary for medical care, persons with the flu should not leave the home until 24 hours after fever ends.
- Open windows in sleeping areas, group rooms, and restrooms to maintain good ventilation in shared areas.
- Monitor yourself and other household members for flu symptoms and contact a telephone hotline or health care provider if symptoms occur.

GENERAL CLEANING, LAUNDRY, AND TRASH DISPOSAL

- Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by the sick person in the trash. Wash your hands after touching used tissues and similar waste.
- Keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.
- Linens, eating utensils, and dishes belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but importantly these items should not be shared without washing thoroughly first.
- Wash linens (such as bed sheets and towels) by using household laundry soap and tumble dry on a hot setting. Avoid “hugging” laundry prior to washing it to prevent contaminating yourself. Clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub right after handling dirty laundry.
- Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with water and soap.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website for the most recent U.S. information.
<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>.
- Visit Department of Public Health website for local information: <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/>.
- Call 2-1-1 if you need help finding medical care.
- Call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hotline 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).
- Call the California Department of Public Health Flu H1N1 (Swine Flu) Hotline (888) 865-0564.