



Taking Care of Someone who has H1N1 Flu in Your Home

H1N1 Flu Symptoms are just like seasonal flu:

- fever
- cough
- sore throat
- body aches
- headache
- chills and fatigue
- sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

Like seasonal flu, H1N1 flu in people can be mild to severe. Severe disease with pneumonia, respiratory failure and even death is possible with H1N1 flu infection. Some groups might be more likely to develop a severe illness, such as persons with chronic health problems.

Please call your Doctor before you go to the clinic to ask if you need tests or if medicine is needed.

People with Flu should:

- **Check with their doctor** about any special care they might need if they are **pregnant** or have a health condition such as **diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema**.
- **Check with their doctor** to see if they need prescription antiviral medications.
- **Stay home and away from others if they are sick** with flu-like symptoms **until 7 days** after the start of illness and until the fever is gone.
- **Get plenty of rest.**
- **Drink clear fluids** (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.
- **Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue or your sleeve.** Throw the tissue in the trash.
- **Wash hands** or use an alcohol-based hand rub often and especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into hands.
- **Keep at least 3 – 6 feet away** from others.
- **Watch for emergency warning signs** (see below) that might mean they need to see a doctor.

Medication

Warning! Do **not** give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to children or teenagers who have the flu; this 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

The medications that are recommended for use to help decrease the symptoms are:

- ✓ Tylenol® (Acetaminophen); Advil®, Motrin® or Nubrin® (Ibuprofen); OR Aleve® (Naproxen)

See a doctor right away if the sick person:

- has trouble breathing or chest pain
- has a purple or blue color of the lips
- is vomiting or has diarrhea and can't keep liquids in
- has signs of dehydration such as dizziness, less urine and infants may not have tears when crying
- has seizures
- does not respond like normal or is confused

Ways to Stop the Spread of Flu in the Home

- **Keep the sick person at home, in their own room and away from other people as much as you can.**
- Have the sick person **wear a surgical mask** if they need to go to other areas of the house, near other people or if they need to leave the home (to go to the doctor).
- Have the sick person cover **their coughs and sneezes** and **wash their hands** with soap and water often.
- Have everyone in the household **wash their hands often**, using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- The sick person should **NOT** have visitors other than caregivers.
- **Pregnant women should NOT care for the sick person** because they can have more problems from the flu.
- Use paper towels for drying hands or give each person their own cloth towel. Try giving different colored towels for each person.
- **Antiviral medications** can be used to prevent the flu, so check with your doctor to see if anyone in the home needs them.

If you are the caregiver

- **Don't be face-to-face** with the sick person.
- Hold small children who are sick with their chin on your shoulder so that they won't cough in your face.
- A person can have the flu and spread it to others before they even know it so the caregiver should **wear a mask** when they leave their home to keep from spreading flu to others.
- **Watch all household members daily for flu symptoms and call your doctor if symptoms occur.**

Household Cleaning & Laundry

- Throw tissues and other throw-away items used by the sick person in the trash. Wash your hands after touching used tissues and other waste.
- Keep everything clean (especially bedside tables, the bathroom, and toys for children) by wiping them down with a household disinfectant (use according to directions on the label).
- Things that cannot be thrown away that are used by the sick person do not need to be cleaned separately, but importantly these items should not be shared without washing very well first.
 - Things you eat with should be washed in a dishwasher or by hand with water and soap.
- Wash laundry (such as bed sheets and towels) by using household laundry soap and tumble dry on a hot setting. Do not "hug" laundry before it is washed to prevent germs from getting on you. Wash your hands right after handling dirty laundry.

For More Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hotline (1-800-CDC-INFO) English and Spanish, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Northeast Nebraska Public Health Department:

402-375-2200 or 800-375-2260

or www.cdc.gov/swineflu/ or www.nnphd.org

Information obtained from http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance_homecare.htm

