

# H1N1 & Parenting a Newborn

Our goal is to provide excellent and safe care for you and your baby. Below are some recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to help you and your baby stay well this flu season, and to help reduce the spread of illness.

## How Can I Protect Myself & Others?

- Wash your hands often – with soap and warm water, or with an alcohol-based, waterless hand sanitizer.
- Avoid exposure to others who are sick with a flu-like illness.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue whenever you cough or sneeze. Then throw the tissue away.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- Do not share anything that goes into the mouth (drinking cups and straws).
- Clean commonly touched surfaces (door knobs, refrigerator handle, phone, water faucets) often if someone in the house has a cold or flu.
- Stay home from social events, school or work if you have a respiratory infection.

With newborns, it is also important that you:

- Do not expose your baby unnecessarily to large crowds when influenza is in your community.
- Avoid putting the baby in close contact (holding, kissing) with family members who may have influenza (fever, muscle aches, runny nose, cough) or other respiratory infections.
- Do not smoke around children

## Flu Symptoms

Please let your nurse know if you begin having any of the following symptoms:

Fever >100°F	Headache
Cough	Vomiting
Sore throat	Diarrhea
Body Aches	Feeling tired
Chills	Runny or stuffy nose

A person who has been infected with the flu virus may be able to infect others for one to seven days. This can be longer in some people, especially children and people with weakened immune systems and in people infected with the flu.

## Breastfeeding & the Flu

Flu can be very serious in young babies. Babies who are breastfed do not get as sick and are sick less often from the flu, than do babies who are not breastfed. Breastfeeding protects babies because breast milk passes on antibodies from the mother to a baby, and antibodies help fight off infection.

- Do not stop breastfeeding if you are ill. Breastfeed early and often. Limit formula feeds if you can. This will help protect your baby from infection.
- Be careful not to cough or sneeze in the baby's face.
- You must wear a mask when the baby is in the room with you and when breastfeeding or bottle feeding. Please use a gown or cover blanket and mask to keep from spreading the flu virus to your baby.
- If you are too sick to breastfeed, pump and have someone give the expressed milk to your baby.
- Remember to wash your hands for 15 – 20 seconds with soap and warm water before and after breastfeeding.

## **While in the Hospital**

If you (mom) are sick or have recently been exposed to someone with the flu:

- You will be placed on “droplet precautions.” This means that anyone entering the room must wear a mask.
- Please remain in the room if possible. This will help reduce the spread of illness.
- If you must leave your room, please wear a mask. Any member of our care team can assist you with this if you need help.
- Wash your hands prior to leaving the room.
- If you are ill, we strongly encourage you to allow staff to care for your baby in the nursery following delivery, rather than having the baby remain in your room.
- If your baby goes to the newborn nursery, he or she will also be placed on “droplet precautions.” This means that he or she will be placed in an isolette, or closed bassinet. Again, this is to help reduce the spread of illness to others.
- If you keep your baby in your room, we strongly encourage you to take the following precautions here at the hospital and until you are well again at home:
  - Wear a surgical mask
  - Change to a clean gown or clothing before handling the baby
  - Wash your hands often, and particularly before and after holding or feeding the baby.

- The nursing staff will also wear a mask when caring for your baby out of the isolette.

## **Visitors to the Hospital**

Every new mother needs her rest, and it is even more important if you are sick.

We know you are eager to introduce your new baby to family and friends, but we suggest that you ask potential visitors to wait until you are feeling better.

If visitors do come to the hospital, please ask them to follow some simple guidelines to help keep everyone healthy as you celebrate this joyous occasion:

- Significant others and visitors over the age of 18 need to wear a mask. Masks are provided by your door or at the nurses' station. Remember, children under 18 are not permitted to visit at this time.
- Visitors need to wash or sanitize their hands to help prevent the spread of illness:
  - Upon arriving at your room
  - Before picking up or playing with the baby
  - After any close contact with you
  - As they are leaving the room

**For more information, contact your doctor or visit  
[www.NoFlu.org](http://www.NoFlu.org)**