

What to Do If You Get Sick?

How Do I Know if I Have the Flu?

You may have the flu if you have some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever greater than 100.0 *
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

**It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.*

These symptoms can be severe, and may require you to stay in bed for several days

What Should I Do if I Get Sick?

If you get sick with flu-like symptoms, stay home and avoid contact with other people, including your own family. The H1N1 virus is mild and most people recover at home in five to seven days with no medical care or medicines. The same is true for seasonal flu.

However, some people are more likely to get flu complications and they should talk to a healthcare provider. They are

- Children younger than five, but especially children younger than two years old
- People 65 and older
- Pregnant women
- People who have cancer, blood disorders (including sickle cell disease), chronic lung disease (including asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or COPD), diabetes, heart disease, kidney and liver disorders, neurological disorders, neuromuscular disorders and weakened immune systems

Healthy people can also develop severe illness from the flu so anyone concerned about their illness should consult a healthcare provider.

What Are the Emergency Warning Signs?

There are emergency warning signs to look for in people with the flu. Anyone who has them should get medical care right away.

In children

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults

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

Do I Need to go the Emergency Room for Care?

No. The emergency room should be used for people who are very sick. Do not go to the emergency room if you are only mildly ill. However, if you are exhibiting any of the emergency warning signs above, then yes, you should go to the emergency room or call 9-1-1 immediately.

If you get sick with flu symptoms and are at high risk of flu complications or you are concerned about your illness, call your healthcare provider for advice.

Are There Medicines to Treat H1N1?

Yes. There are drugs your healthcare provider may prescribe for treating both seasonal and H1N1 flu. These medicines are called antiviral drugs. These drugs can make you better faster and may also prevent serious complications.

This flu season, antiviral drugs are being used mainly to treat people who are very sick, such as people who need to be hospitalized, and to treat sick people who are more likely to get serious flu complications. Your healthcare provider will decide whether antiviral drugs are needed to treat your particular illness. What works for you might not work for a family member or friend, so talk with your healthcare provider.

And remember, the H1N1 virus is mild. Most people have not needed medical care or medicines. The same is true of seasonal flu.

How Long Should I Stay Home if I'm Sick?

The CDC recommends that you stay home from work, school, travel, shopping and social events for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol®).

What Should I Do While I'm Sick?

- Stay home as described above.
- Maintain a distance of at least six feet from family members until you have been fever free for 24 hours without medication.
- Rest and drink lots of fluids. This will help your body recover from the infection.
- Sleep in a separate room from others while you have a fever, but make sure you have a phone available should you need help.
- Take medication such as acetaminophen to relieve the symptoms, but never give aspirin to children or teenagers

who have flu like symptoms without talking to your doctor.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue whenever you cough or sneeze. Then throw the tissue away.
- Wash your hands often – with soap and water, or with an alcohol-based, waterless hand sanitizer
- Limit what you touch in your home while sick, and clean commonly touched surfaces (door knobs, refrigerator handle, phone, water faucets)
- If you are not able to maintain a six-foot distance from others in your family, wear a mask through day seven following the start of your symptoms.
- If you must leave home, for example to get medical care, wear a mask and notify the physician office or hospital staff members immediately that you have flu-like symptoms.

Where Do I Go for More Information?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Web site has a wealth of information on H1N1 and seasonal flu at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu.

For more information visit www.NoFlu.org