

Taking Care of a Sick Person in Your Home

Influenza (flu) viruses are thought to spread mostly from person to person through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with influenza. People also may get sick by touching something with influenza viruses on it and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes before washing their hands.

People with Influenza who are cared for at home should:



Check with their health care provider 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 health care provider about whether they should take antiviral medications.



Keep away from others as much as possible. This is to keep from making others sick. Do not go to work or school while ill.

Stay home for at least 24 hours after fever is gone, except to seek medical care or for other necessities. (Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)



Get plenty of rest.



Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.



Cover coughs and sneezes. Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer often, especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into hands.



Clean common areas such as bathrooms, a couple times a day.



Avoid sharing personal items like towels, toothbrushes, pillows, eating utensils, and cups.



Be watchful for emergency warning signs that might indicate you need to seek immediate medical attention.



When someone is ill, knowing “What to do” and “When to do it” can be difficult questions. Use the tips below for help.

Flu-like symptoms include: fever (usually high), headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, sore throat, vomiting, and sometimes diarrhea.

If a person becomes ill with any of the following warning signs, call your healthcare provider and seek immediate medical attention.

Children	Adults
Fast breathing or trouble breathing	Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
Bluish or gray skin color	Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
Not drinking enough fluids	Sudden dizziness
Severe or persistent vomiting	Severe or persistent vomiting
Not waking up or not interacting	Confusion
Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough.	Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held	