

## CARING FOR A SICK PERSON AT HOME

### *Relieving fever, chills, aches, sore throat and headache:*

- Take and record the patient's temperature in the morning and evening.
- Give fever-reducing medications containing acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Aspirin may be used but must be avoided in anyone under age 20. Check with your doctor for dosages.
- A lukewarm bath may help.
- Encourage gargling with warm salt water or using throat lozenges.
- Offer ice cream, sherbet or popsicles to ease sore throat pain, especially in children too young to gargle or use lozenges.

### *Relieving cough and respiratory symptoms:*

- Avoid prolonged bed rest because this may lead to chest congestion and pneumonia. Help the patient to change positions in bed and to get out of bed to a chair or for brief walks around the room every 2-3 daytime hours.
- Have the patient take 4-5 slow, deep breaths and try to cough every 2-3 hours during the day to promote lung expansion and clearing of phlegm.
- Elevate the patient's head and upper body with cushions as this may ease breathing.
- Provide cough syrup (if > 2 years old).
- Provide warm beverages, a room humidifier and/or have the patient spend time in a steamy bathroom to ease congestion.

For more detail go to:  
[cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance\\_homecare.htm](http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm)

### *Relieving nausea, vomiting and diarrhea:*

- Offer clear liquids in small but frequent sips (or use ice chips). Give water, juices, Jell-O®, broths, ginger ale, and decaffeinated tea as tolerated. Avoid alcohol and beverages with caffeine, as these tend to dehydrate. Give fluids that contain electrolytes like Pedialyte® for children or sports drinks for adults.
- Once diarrhea, nausea and vomiting have stopped, offer soft bland food like: white toast (no butter), rice, potatoes (no skin), and crackers.
- Avoid use of anti-diarrhea and anti-vomiting medication.
- Watch for signs of dehydration including dry lips or mouth and decreased amounts of urine that appears darker than normal. In infants watch for a decreased number of wet diapers.

## WHEN SHOULD A FLU PATIENT GO TO THE DOCTOR?

Most illness can be managed best at home. Doctors' offices and hospitals may in fact increase the risk of contagion. If you are unsure if the patient should see a doctor, call your health care provider. Guidelines are based on the worst-case pandemic scenario.

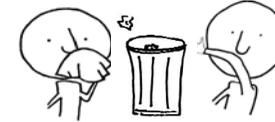
### *In general, flu patients should be seen by a health care provider when:*

- The patient has a high fever:
  - Children and adults - 105° and higher
  - Babies 3 to 24 months - 103° and higher
  - Babies under 3 months - a rectal temperature of 100.4° and higher
- The patient has any of the following symptoms:
  - Stiff neck
  - Confusion and irritability
  - Bluish skin
  - Inability to move an arm or leg
  - A cough producing frothy or red sputum
  - Difficulty or chest pain with breathing
  - First time seizure

## PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDS YOU ...

### **COVER YOUR COUGH!**

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve. Put used tissues in the trash. Clean your hands with soap or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.



### **STAY HOME**

Stay home when you are sick. Do not go to school or work if sick, nor have visitors in the home. Most illness can be managed at home without a visit to the doctor.

### **CLEAN YOUR HANDS**

Use soap for 20 seconds or more or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner especially after touching things like doorknobs, pens, light switches, remote controls, grocery carts, and tissues used to blow your nose.

### **CLEAN SURFACES**

Use common household cleaning agents. Special disinfectants are not necessary.

### **STOCK A SUPPLY**

Keep a supply of masks, gloves, soap, tissues, paper towels and cleaning supplies.

### **PROVIDE REASSURANCE**

Reassure your family member that you will be there to take care of them.

**EAT WELL \* REST \* STAY INFORMED**

# YOUR GUIDE TO PREPARING FOR PANDEMIC FLU

## San Luis Obispo County



## Public Health Department

Your health & safety are important to us. This guide will help you know more about pandemic flu, how you can help prevent spread of this disease, and what to do if you or a family member becomes ill with the flu.

### **For more information:**

[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

To learn more about us, visit  
[www.slocounty.ca.gov/health](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/health)

or call 805-781-5500

## YOUR PANDEMIC FLU EMERGENCY KIT

It is important to have supplies and medications available in the event of an emergency. In a pandemic flu, as many as 1 in 3 people could get sick. Some services and items we count on everyday could become unavailable. Here are some ideas of what to keep in your family preparedness kit.



### TWO WEEKS WORTH OF:

- Food that does not need refrigeration.
- Water, at least one gallon per person per day stored in sealed, unbreakable containers (in an emergency, filling the bathtub can help).
- Prescription Medication
- Over-the-Counter Medication for fever, such as ibuprofen (ex. Motrin®, Advil®, or store-brand) or acetaminophen (ex. Tylenol®, or store-brand).

### ALSO:

- Cell Phone & Charger
- Masks & Disposable Gloves: Use when directed to help prevent the spread of disease, especially when taking care of others who are sick.

## What is the difference between Seasonal Flu and Pandemic Flu?

SEASONAL FLU	PANDEMIC FLU
Occurs every year in winter. Having had the flu before may provide some protection from getting it in future years.	Rare - only three times in the 20th century. The last time was 1968. Since pandemic flu is a new strain, there is little or no immunity.
Healthy adults are not usually at risk for serious complications.	Healthy people may be at risk for serious complications.
The medical community can usually manage patient needs.	The medical community may be overwhelmed.
Vaccines are developed before the flu season, based on known virus strains.	Vaccine development takes several months, may not be available as soon as needed.
Antiviral drugs are usually available.	Effective antiviral drugs or the supply may be limited.
Average number of deaths in the US is about 36,000 per year.	The number of deaths could be much higher; world-wide it could be millions.
Symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, and muscle pain	Symptoms: Same as Seasonal Flu; may be more serious with medical complications
Small impact on the community with sick people staying home from work or school.	Community impact may be large with possible school closings, limited business hours and cancellation of public gatherings.
Small impact on US and world economy.	Could have a big impact on US and world economy.

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

The following numbers are for non-emergency calls and can provide disaster related assistance and preparedness information.

Public Health Information Line (PHIL)	805-788-2903
SLO Chapter of the American Red Cross	805-543-0696
SLO County Office of Emergency Services	805-781-5011
State of California H1N1 Information Line	1-888-865-0564

## WHAT IS PANDEMIC H1N1 FLU?



This new influenza virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009 and has now spread to most countries worldwide.

This virus was originally referred to as "Swine Flu" because it contains genes similar to influenza viruses that occur in pigs. Further study has shown however that this new virus also contains avian flu genes and human flu genes. Thus, this "quadruple reassortant" virus is now called novel or pandemic H1N1.

A new vaccine against pandemic H1N1 is in production and will be available in the coming months as an option for prevention. People at greatest risk for pandemic H1N1 infection are children, young adults (college age), pregnant women, and people with chronic health conditions like heart or lung disease, asthma and diabetes. If you meet any of these criteria, please stay tuned in to messages about vaccine availability.

Antiviral medications will also be available for those individuals who need it to prevent serious flu complications. Caution, however, is advised against widespread use of these medicines in order to prevent drug resistance.