



H1N1 INFORMATION

How to: Caring for Sick at Home

This information was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and should not replace discussions with your health care provider.

If you are taking care of someone at home who has either H1N1 or seasonal flu, you should protect yourself and other people in the household.

- Avoid being face-to-face with the sick person. If you are holding small children who are sick, place their chin on your shoulder so they will not cough in your face.
- If close contact with a sick individual is unavoidable, consider wearing a facemask or respirator, if available and tolerable.
- Ask the person's health care provider about any special care that might be needed, especially if the person is pregnant or has a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema.
- Ask the patient's health care provider whether the patient should take antiviral medications.
- Keep the sick person away from other people as much as possible, especially others who are at high risk of complications from influenza.
- Make sure everyone in the household cleans their hands often, using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. Supervise children when using alcohol based hand sanitizer because of the dangers associated with accidental ingestion.
- Ask your healthcare provider if household contacts of the sick person—particularly those contacts who may have chronic health conditions—should take antiviral medications such as to prevent getting the flu.

Watch the patient for the following warnings signs. If they exhibit these symptoms, seek medical care outside the home right away:

In children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- 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

In adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough