

This information is for those people being tested for novel influenza A (H1N1). This will provide information for what do in your home to prevent the spread illness to your family and friends.

**What is novel influenza A (H1N1)?**

The novel flu virus, which is currently circulating in the U.S. and other parts of the world, is a unique combination of four influenza viruses including swine and human. This virus is transmitted from person to person, not from pigs to humans.

**What are the signs and symptoms of novel influenza A (H1N1) in people?**

The symptoms of novel influenza A (H1N1) in people are similar to the symptoms of regular flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with novel influenza A (H1N1), on top of respiratory symptoms. Complications of novel flu may include pneumonia, respiratory failure, and death. Like seasonal flu, novel influenza A (H1N1) may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

**How does novel influenza A (H1N1) spread?**

Spread of this novel influenza A (H1N1) virus is spreading the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it, like a door knob, and then touching their mouth or nose.

**What should I do if I am staying home because of novel flu?**

People with swine flu who are cared for at home should:

- check with their health care provider about any special care 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
- stay home for 7 days after the start of illness or until 24 hours after symptoms have stopped whichever is longer.
- 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 rub often and especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into hands.
- avoid close contact with others – stay home
- be watchful for emergency warning signs (see below) that might indicate you need to seek medical attention
- For mask guidance see below

**When to Seek Emergency Medical Care**

Get medical care right away if the sick person at home:

- has difficulty breathing or chest pain
- has purple or blue discoloration of the lips
- is vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
- has signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination, or in infants, a lack of tears when they cry
- has seizures (for example, uncontrolled convulsions)
- is less responsive than normal or becomes confused

## **What can I do if I am caring for an ill person in the home to reduce the spread of flu home?**

The most important ways to protect yourself and others who are not sick are to:

- keep the sick person away from other people as much as possible (see below)
- remind the sick person to cover their coughs, and clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often, including after every contact with the ill person
- have everyone in the household clean their hands often, using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub
- 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 oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) or zanamivir (Relenza®) to prevent them from getting this flu.

### **Placement of the sick person**

- Keep the sick person in a room separate from the common areas of the house. (For example, a spare bedroom with its own bathroom, if that's possible.) Keep the sickroom door closed.
- Unless necessary for medical care, persons with the flu should not leave the home until 7 days after onset of symptoms or until 24 hours after symptoms stop in adults. Children may pass the virus for longer than 7 days.
- If persons with the flu must leave the home (for example, for medical care), they should wear a loose-fitting surgical type mask if available and be sure to cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing if a mask is not available. Always call ahead to your medical provider so that appropriate measures can be taken to prevent of disease spread at the clinic or emergency room, such as meeting at the door with a mask, etc.
- Have the sick person wear a surgical mask if they need to go thru a common area of the house near other persons.
- If possible, sick persons should use a separate bathroom. This bathroom should be cleaned daily with household disinfectant.

### **Protect other persons in the home**

- The sick person should not have visitors other than caregiver. A phone call is much safer than a visit.
- If possible, have only one adult in the home take care of the sick person.
- Avoid having pregnant women care for the sick person. (Pregnant women are at increased risk of influenza-related complications and immunity can be suppressed during pregnancy).
- Use paper towels for drying hands after hand washing or dedicate cloth towels for everyone in the household. For example, have different colored towels for each person.
- If weather permits maintain good ventilation in shared household areas (e.g., keeping windows open in restrooms, kitchen, bathroom, etc.).

### **If you are the caregiver**

- Avoid being face-to-face with the sick person.
- When holding small children who are sick, place their chin on your shoulder so that they will not cough in your face.
- Clean your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub after every contact with the sick person, or handle used tissues, or laundry.
- Caregivers might catch flu from the person they are caring for and then the caregiver might be able to spread the flu to others before the caregiver shows symptoms. **The care giver should monitor their health and household members for flu symptoms and contact their health care provider if symptoms occur.**

## Using Facemasks or Respirators

- Avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with the sick person as much as possible.
- If you must have close contact with the sick person (for example, hold a sick infant), spend the least amount of time possible in close contact and try to wear a facemask (for example, surgical mask) or “special type” face mask called a N95 disposable respirator. An N95 respirator that fits snugly on your face can filter out small particles that can be inhaled around the edges of a facemask, but compared with a facemask it is harder to breathe through an N95 mask for long periods of time. More information on facemasks and respirators can be found at [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu)
- Facemasks and respirators may be purchased at a pharmacy, building supply or hardware store.
- Wear an N95 respirator if you help a sick person with respiratory treatments using a nebulizer or inhaler, as directed by their doctor. Respiratory treatments should be performed in the sickroom away from common areas of the house when possible.
- When removing facemasks and N95 respirators they should be placed immediately in the regular trash so they don’t touch anything else in the house. Immediately clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid re-using disposable facemasks and N95 respirators if possible. If a reusable fabric facemask is used, it should be laundered with normal laundry detergent and tumble-dried in a hot dryer, before re-using.

## What steps should I take for household cleaning, laundry, and waste disposal after there has been an ill person in the home?

- Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by the sick person in the trash. Wash your hands after touching used tissues and similar waste.
- Keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.
- Linens, eating utensils, and dishes belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but importantly these items should not be shared without washing thoroughly first.
- Wash linens (such as bed sheets and towels) by using household laundry soap and tumble dry on a hot setting. Avoid “hugging” laundry prior to washing it to prevent contaminating yourself. Clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub right after handling dirty laundry.
- Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with water and soap.

**Warning!** Do *not* give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to children or teenagers who have the flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye’s syndrome.

**Check with your healthcare provider or pharmacist for correct, safe use of medications**

Antiviral medications can sometimes help lessen influenza symptoms, but require a prescription. Most people do not need these antiviral drugs to fully recover from the flu. However, persons at high risk for severe flu complications, those with severe flu illness, or those who require hospitalization, might benefit from antiviral medications. Ask your healthcare provider whether you should take antiviral medication. Influenza infections can be complicated by bacterial infections. Therefore, some people may also need to take antibiotics. More severe or prolonged illness (or illness that seems to get better, but then gets worse) again may be an indication that a person has a bacterial infection. Check with your healthcare provider if you have concerns.

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- Check ingredient labels on over-the-counter cold and flu medications to make sure they do not contain aspirin.
- Teenagers with the flu can take medicines *without* aspirin, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®), to relieve symptoms.
- Children younger than 2 years of age should not be given over-the-counter cold medications without first checking with a healthcare provider.
- The safest care for flu symptoms in children younger than 2 years of age is using a cool-mist humidifier and a suction bulb to help clear away mucus.
- Fevers and aches can be treated with certain non-aspirin containing) acetaminophen or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) such as:

Generic Name	Brand Name(s)
Acetaminophen	Tylenol®
Ibuprofen	Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®
Naproxen	Aleve

- Over-the-counter cold and flu medications may help lessen some symptoms such as cough and congestion. Importantly, these medications will not lessen how infectious a person is. Use them according to the package instructions.
- Check the ingredients on the package label of the over the counter medications to see if the medication already contains acetaminophen or ibuprofen before taking additional doses of these medications—don't double dose! Patients with kidney disease or stomach problems should check with their health care provider before taking any of these medications.

Check with your health care provider or pharmacist if you are taking other over-the-counter or prescription medications not related to the flu. For more information on products for treating flu symptoms, see the FDA website: [http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2005/105\\_buy.html](http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2005/105_buy.html).