

# 2009 H1N1 Flu

## What to do if you or a family member is sick

### What to do if you are sick

- If you become ill with flu like symptoms, such as fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, please contact your doctor. Your doctor will advise you on what you should do during your illness and recovery.
- Individuals with underlying chronic medical conditions should contact their doctors at the earliest sign or symptom of illness. The following are considered at high risk for complications of flu: pregnant women; individuals with asthma, COPD, diabetes, or chronic cardiovascular disease; and immuno-compromised persons. It is appropriate for those with chronic medical conditions to reach out to their doctors before they become ill to understand their risk and how or when their doctors would like to be contacted in the event they get the flu.
- Stay home and do not go to work, school or other crowded places. Leave home only to seek medical care as per the guidance provided by your doctor.
- Minimize the spread of infection by taking simple steps outlined in the next section.
- Do not go to work until you are free of fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicines. (Check with your manager as workplace policies differ on how you report illness and what documentation you may be required to submit)
- Most individuals with H1N1 flu will recover without complications.

### How to make sure that your family does not get sick

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible. This is to keep from making others sick.
- While sick, limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Visit the CDC website (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm>) to find out what to do if you get sick with the flu and how to care for someone at home who is sick with the flu.
- Educate your family, especially children, on these routine precautions to lower your risk of infection.



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## How to make sure that your family does not get sick

If you are sick with flu-like illness, the CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible so that you do not make them sick.

## When you should start treatment with flu medications like Tamiflu or Relenza

Please contact your doctor and discuss your concerns. Your doctor will determine the need for antiviral medications after assessing your illness. The medications are available with a prescription ONLY. If your doctor thinks that these medications are not needed, please do not try to obtain them through unauthorized websites that can provide the medications to you without a prescription, as you may be getting an unsafe medication or one that may not work.

## What you should do if someone is sick at your home

The CDC recommends that you do the following when you are taking care of someone with flu at home:

- Check with their doctor or other attending health care professional about any special care they might need if they are pregnant or have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema.
- Ask their doctor or other attending health care professional if 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 your 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 rub often and especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into hands.
- Wear a facemask – if available and tolerable – when sharing common spaces with other household members to help prevent spreading the virus to others. This is especially important if other household members are at high risk for complications from influenza.
- Be watchful for emergency warning signs (see below) that might indicate you need to seek medical attention.



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## When to seek emergency care

The following are some of the situations that require you to 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.

This list is not all inclusive. If the condition of the sick family member at home is worsening, you should contact the doctor immediately.

## How your workplace will count this absence from work

Workplace policies differ from place to place. Please ask your manager and follow his or her instructions.

## Where you can get more information

- CDC website - <http://www.cdc.gov/>
- Your local Health Department website.
- Your doctor

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