

This guide assumes home care is the best option.

Adulthood is defined as 12 years of age and older. This information can be used for seasonal influenza and with or without antiviral treatment.

Minimize the spread of influenza (flu)

Recognize flu symptoms

- Fever/chills
- Cough
- Sometimes vomiting and diarrhea
- Body aches
- Headache
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Extreme fatigue

Understand how flu may spread

- Droplets from an infected person when they cough, sneeze or talk
- Airborne droplets can enter the body through the eyes, nose or mouth
- Contaminated surfaces or objects



Practice social distancing measures

- Stay at least 6 feet away from people during a flu outbreak
- Wear a mask (if available and tolerable)
- If you are sick, wear a mask to minimize spreading the flu to others
- If you are not sick, wear a mask if you are near sick people

Wash your hands

- Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds or
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, when soap and water are not available

Cover your cough and sneeze

- Use a tissue, not your hands. Dispose of tissue immediately and wash your hands
- If no tissue is available, use your upper sleeve

Everyone should get a seasonal flu vaccine

Clean and Disinfect

- Frequently wipe surfaces like doorknobs, phones, faucets, and food preparation areas with household disinfectants.
- Always follow label instructions. Keep disinfectants away from children, pets, heat, flames, and electrical equipment.
- Don't share linens, utensils, or dishes without washing first.

General care measures

- Get plenty of rest in a separate room away from the common areas of the house
- Avoid contact with others who are or may be infected and stay at home if you are sick for at least 24 hours after fever is gone without the use of fever reducing medicines.
- Limit caregivers
- If you are in a high-risk group for complications with the flu, do not attempt close contact (within 6 feet) with household members who may be infected with the flu.
- Drink extra fluids
- Gargle with warm salt water
- Use throat sprays or lozenges, saline nose drops, and a cool mist humidifier
- Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of patient
- Sponging with lukewarm water may lower body temperature.
- Treat symptoms with over-the-counter (OTC) medications

Monitor and record (Use Home Care Record on back)

- Record date and time
- Record body temperature every 2-3 hours
- Record skin color changes or rashes
- Record the approximate quantity of fluids consumed each day and through the night
- Record how many times urination occurs each day
- Record all medicines given

Muscle pain and fever

- Use acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®)
- DO NOT USE ASPIRIN OR PRODUCTS CONTAINING ASPIRIN (acetylsalicylic acid) FOR CHILDREN UNDER 19 YEARS OF AGE

General guidelines for over-the-counter (OTC) medications for symptom relief

- Always follow instructions on the label of each medication
- If taking more than one medication at a time, check the labels to avoid taking the same ingredient twice.
- Please note health conditions, prescription and OTC medications may cause drug interactions.
- Check the expiration date on medications. Dispose of any medications that are out of date.
- OTC medications may lessen symptoms, but not lessen infectiousness
- Stop taking medications when symptoms improve
- Keep all medications out of reach of children

Avoid dehydration

- Drink 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 quarts of fluid per day or 50 to 82 ounces of fluid per day
- Drink small amounts of fluids frequently to prevent dehydration, even if not feeling thirsty
- If not eating solid foods, include fluids that contain sugars and salts, such as broth or soup, sports drinks, ginger ale and other sodas. No diet drinks.
- Home electrolyte drink*
 - Mix 1 quart water
 - 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
 - 1/2 teaspoon table salt or 1/4 teaspoon salt substitute
 - 3-4 tablespoons sugar
- If vomiting, do not give the patient any fluids or food by mouth for at least 1 hour
- Let the stomach rest
- Give clear fluids, like water, juice, broth, and sports drinks, in very small amounts
- Start with 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon of clear fluids every 10 minutes
- When vomiting stops, gradually increase the fluids and add fluids that contain sugars and salts
- Continue a liquid diet for 6-8 hours if no vomiting, add solid foods that are easy to digest, such as saltine crackers, soup, mashed potatoes, or rice
- Gradually return to a regular diet
- Avoid drinking alcohol and using tobacco. Smoking should not be allowed in the home or near an ill patient.
- Regular urination is a sign of good hydration

Seek medical care immediately if you or a person in your care has one of the following symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath
- Bluish or gray color to the skin or lips
- Complaints of pain or pressure in the chest
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination or unable to keep liquids down
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

For more information on pandemic flu, visit:

- Alabama Department of Public Health - adph.org/pandemicflu
- Department of Health and Human Services - flu.gov
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - cdc.gov
- Contact your private provider or local health department

*<http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/Dehydration-Home-Treatment>

