

## Taking care of someone with the flu

You or a family member has been diagnosed with the flu. Your symptoms may include a fever, body aches, cough, sore throat, feeling tired, nausea, and diarrhea. There are some steps that you can take to help alleviate symptoms and focus on getting well.

1. **Stay home and rest.** Not only is it good practice for the patient, but staying home reduces the likelihood that a contagious person may infect others. People can be contagious one day before flu symptoms are present and up to five days after flu symptoms subside.
2. **Practice social distancing.** Even at home, it is best to keep someone who has the flu away from other family members. Caregivers should be careful to wash their hands after each interaction with their sick family member. Keep unwashed hands away from mouth, eyes, and nose.
3. **Avoid sharing** towels, glasses, or food. Also, dispose of used facial tissues immediately and properly.
4. **Drink plenty of liquid and eat well.** Avoid using alcohol and tobacco.
5. **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.
6. **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.
7. **Check with a health care provider** about any special care a patient may need. Patients with serious health conditions may require the use of antiviral medications.
8. **Several over-the-counter (OTC) medications** are available to relieve the symptoms of the flu. Never give aspirin to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms, particularly fever. Fevers and aches can be treated with acetaminophen or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as naproxen or ibuprofen. Persons with chronic conditions should check with their doctor for any additional care they may need.
9. **Be aware of emergency warning signs** that require urgent medical attention:
  - Difficulty or rapid breathing
  - Chest pain or pressure
  - Purple or blue discoloration of the lips
  - Vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
  - Signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination, or in infants, a lack of tears when they cry
  - Seizures (uncontrolled convulsions)
  - Less responsive than normal, cannot be aroused
  - Confused or agitated
  - Fever with rash

