Home Care Instructions for Influenza

Influenza, also called the flu, is a virus that can cause a serious upper respiratory infection in the chest with coughing, fever, and congestion. Follow this care plan at home for you or a family member who has the flu.

To Limit the Spread of the Flu

You may spread the flu virus starting from the day before you have signs and up to 7 days after you get sick. Young children and persons with serious medical conditions might spread the virus for longer periods.

- Stay home from work or school.
- Avoid running errands and close contact with others.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water and a paper towel to turn off the water faucet. Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Watch for flu signs in those who live with you. If they have serious medical conditions or are pregnant, they should tell their doctor, they were exposed to flu.
- Return to work, social and public events 24 hours after your fever is gone and you are not using medicines to prevent fever.

Medicines and General Care

Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about medicines used to control the signs of flu. If your doctor prescribes flu medicine, do not skip any doses, and take it as directed.

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• For fever and pain, you can take acetaminophen sold by the brand name Tylenol. Ibuprofen may be used instead of acetaminophen, and this is sold by the brand names of Advil, Motrin and Nuprin. For cough, medicine can be taken to ease coughing. For all medicines, follow the instructions for how much to take and how often to take them.
  ▶ Do not give aspirin or products that contain aspirin to children 18 years old or younger.
  ▶ Do not give children younger than 4 years of age over the counter cold medicine without first talking with a health care provider.

• Drink plenty of fluids such as water, broth, sports drinks to keep your fluid levels up. If your baby or young child has flu signs, give electrolyte beverages, like Pedialyte.

• Eat healthy foods. If vomiting or having diarrhea, choose foods bland, low fiber foods such as toast or crackers, applesauce, rice, bananas, broth or yogurt.

When to Get Emergency Care

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room for treatment for these signs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infants and Children</th>
<th>Adults</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Trouble breathing, breathing fast or short of breath</td>
<td>• Trouble breathing or short of breath</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Bluish skin color</td>
<td>• Pain or pressure in chest or abdomen</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Signs of dehydration, such as no tears when crying, not drinking enough fluids, or very few wet diapers</td>
<td>• Sudden dizziness or Confusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Not waking up or interacting</td>
<td>• Severe or persistent vomiting</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held</td>
<td>• Flu symptoms that improve then return with fever and worse cough</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Signs of flu that improve, then return with fever and worse cough</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fever with a rash</td>
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For More Information

- If you live in Columbus or Franklin County, get more information from the Columbus Pandemic Flu website at http://www.columbuspandemicflu.org

- If you live in Columbus or Central Ohio get more information by calling 211 or 221-2255. Trained personnel can provide health and safety information about the flu. Visit the website: http://www håndsoncentralohio.org

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636). This is a free call and is answered 24 hours a day 7 days a week in English or Spanish. Visit the website at http://www.flu.gov/

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have any questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.