

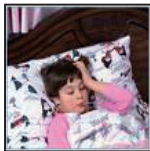
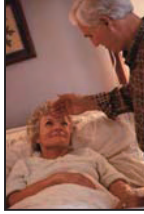
Caring for Family Members with FLU

How do you know it's really influenza (the flu)?

Although the flu often shares some symptoms that are similar to "colds", it causes more than a runny nose or a case of the sniffles. Influenza symptoms usually have a rapid onset and include **fever**, **chills** and **severe body aches**.

Early on many flu sufferers feel so **weak** that they can hardly stand. Once the flu virus begins spreading in the body the sufferer begins **coughing** and a **stuffy and/or runny nose** and **sore throat** appear. **Headaches** are also very common. Abdominal pain and nausea are sometimes found in children, but are not usually seen in adults.

Most people experience at least three days of severe symptoms and an average recovery period ranging from seven to 14 days.



Preventing the spread of flu!

The best ways to reduce your chance of getting the flu or spreading it to others is to:

- Get your annual flu shot.
- Do not share personal items with others.
- Wash your hands regularly:
 1. Wet hands with warm running water and apply soap.
 2. Rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds covering all surfaces including fingers and under fingernails.
 3. Rinse your hands with warm water.
 4. Dry your hands well with a paper towel.
- Use hand sanitizer when you are unable to wash your hands.
- Keep your hands away from your face.
- Limit close contact. Maintain a distance of more than three feet between yourself and others, particularly those with flu symptoms.
- Stay at home when you are sick.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Contact your health care provider if you experience quick onset fever, chills, and severe body aches. Anti-viral medications may be prescribed to lessen the flu effects.



How the flu spreads

Like all viruses, the flu needs a host in order to survive and multiply. The virus is transmitted when an infected person exhales, coughs or sneezes and tiny droplets of contaminated saliva are expelled. This person may or may not have flu symptoms.

The person being infected then inhales the virus which begins to multiply in the upper airway. Within one to three days of exposure, the person begins having symptoms and the immune system begins to respond to the infection. Flu sufferers can remain contagious for up to a week after symptoms appear. The flu virus can also be transmitted by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your nose or other mucous membrane.



When a family member is sick

To reduce the likelihood of the flu spreading to others you should consider the following:

- Keep personal items separate.
- Designate one person as the caregiver.
- Every day, disinfect surfaces that are commonly touched by the flu sufferer.
- Wear disposable gloves when you are cleaning up body fluids.
- Keep the sick person isolated. Ask others to offer support by telephone or email and not by visiting.



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Caring for Family Members with **FLU**

Caring for a loved one with the flu?

In most cases, the best care for a flu sufferer can be delivered at home by family members. Here are a few keys for providing effective, supportive care for your loved ones.

Common flu systems include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Stuffy and/or runny nose
- Muscle pain
- Fatigue/tiredness

Monitoring symptoms:

- Keep a patient care log making note every four hours or when medications are given or symptoms change

Call your healthcare provider **IMMEDIATELY if your patient has any of these symptoms:**

- ✓ **A fever**
 - Children and adults:
Any temperature of higher than 103° F
 - Babies three to 24 months:
Any temperature of higher than 102° F
 - Newborns up to three months:
A rectal temperature of higher than 100.4° F
- ✓ **Coughing that produces thick mucous or blood**
- ✓ **Dehydration**
 - Decreased saliva/dry mouth
 - Decreased urination or dark colored urine
 - Unconsciousness/confusion
- ✓ **Worsening of a pre-existing medical condition**
- ✓ **Trouble breathing/shortness of breath**

Prevent Dehydration:

- Give plenty of liquids including ice and easily digested foods like broth and Jell-O

Reduce Fever:

- Give plenty of liquids
- Give fever reducers as directed by your physician and/or directions on the medicine label
- Keep a record of temperature and medications in the care log
- Avoid hot showers or baths

Encourage Rest & Sleep

Important Supplies:

The following items should be purchased ahead of time and stored in a central location in your home.

- Thermometer
- Box of disposable gloves
- Acetaminophen
- Ibuprofen
- Alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Paper towels
- Tissues
- Plastic trash bags
(for waste disposal)
- Clear liquids
 - Sprite or 7-Up soda
 - Jell-O
 - Soup broth
 - Popsicles
 - Gatorade or other sports drinks
- Bleach and other cleaning materials

For More Information:

Call your doctor and/or visit this website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>



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