

Frequently Asked Questions – What should I do if I have the flu?

How do I know if I have the flu?

Symptoms of the flu, both the seasonal and H1N1 (also known as the swine flu) include the following:

- fever (Not everyone with flu will have a fever.)
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- body aches
- headache
- chills
- fatigue
- sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

What should I do if I get sick?

Most people with the flu do not have to see their doctor or take prescription medication. If you are at home with the flu you should follow the directions below.

- 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 fever is gone, except to seek medical care or for other necessities. Your 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. Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Wear a facemask – if available – to prevent others in your family member getting the flu.
- Be careful for emergency warning signs (see below).

What are the warning signs of becoming very ill with the flu?

If the person who is ill is under five years old, over 65, pregnant or has an illness such as diabetes, they should talk to their doctor and ask if they should be seen.

It is also possible for healthy people to become very ill from the flu. If you or someone you know has the following symptoms, you should get medical care right away.

In children

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash



In adults

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

How long should I stay home if I'm sick?

It is recommended that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone. Your fever should be gone without the use of a medicine, such as Tylenol, aspirin or ibuprofen. You should stay home from work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings.

What should I do while I'm sick?

Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from making them sick. If you must leave home, for example to get medical care, wear a facemask if you have one, or cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Wash your hands often to keep from spreading flu to others.