



What You Should Know When Caring for Someone at Home Who Has Novel Influenza A (H1N1)

Symptoms of novel Influenza A (H1N1) Influenza (Novel flu)

The symptoms can include fever, body aches, sore throat, headache and cough. Some people may also have diarrhea and vomit.

How novel flu is spread?

- By an ill person coughing or sneezing on or near another person (the same way as seasonal flu.)
- Sometimes people can become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it (such as a door knob) with their hand and then touching their mouth or nose. The flu virus gets on items such as door knobs by someone coughing into their hand, not washing their hands and then touching the door knob.

Who is more likely to get severely ill from the novel H1N1 flu?

People at higher risk include:

- pregnant women
- persons aged 6 months--24 years
- persons aged 25--64 years who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, etc) or are immunosuppressed (e.g., taking immunosuppressive medications, infected with HIV)
- (This is different than seasonal flu when the elderly are at high risk. For reasons that are not well understood, the elderly are at low risk of getting ill with novel H1N1 flu.)

Who should take care of the sick person?

- Have only one adult in the home take care of the sick person.
- People at increased risk of severe illness from flu should not be the designated caretaker.

How can the caretaker can protect themselves?

- Clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub frequently, including after every contact with the sick person, the person's room or bathroom, and the after handling used tissues or laundry.
- Avoid being within 3-6 feet of the sick person if possible.
- If being close to the sick person cannot be avoided, consider wearing a facemask.
- If holding small children who are sick, place their chin on your shoulder so that they will not cough in your face.

How to protect other household members?

- Sick people should not care for infants or other people at high risk for complications of influenza.
- The sick person should stay in a room separate from family members and away from the common areas of the house. (For example, a spare bedroom with its own bathroom, if that's possible.) Keep the sickroom door closed.
- If possible, sick persons should use a separate bathroom. This bathroom should be cleaned daily with regular household disinfectant.
- Other household members, especially those at high risk for complications of influenza, should not come within 6 feet of the person who is ill.
- Have the sick person wear a facemask, if available and tolerable, if they need to be in a common area of the house near other persons.

- All persons in the household should clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub frequently, including after every contact with the sick person or the person's room or bathroom.
- Use paper towels for drying hands after hand washing or have separate cloth towels for each person in the household. For example, have different colored towels for each person.
- Maintaining good ventilation in common areas of the house (e.g., keeping windows open in restrooms, kitchen, keep vent going in bathroom, etc.).

How should household cleaning, laundry, and waste disposal be handled?

- Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by the sick person in the trash. Wash your hands after touching used tissues and similar waste.
- Keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and toys for children) clean by washing or wiping them down with a household disinfectant.
- Wash things like bed sheets and towels using household laundry soap, and machine wash and dry on a hottest setting the material will allow.
 - Avoid "hugging" laundry prior to washing it to prevent contaminating yourself.
 - Clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub right after handling dirty laundry.
- Wash eating utensils in a dishwasher or by hand with hot water and soap.
- Linens, eating utensils, and dishes used by sick people do not need to be cleaned separately, but should not be used by others until washed thoroughly.

How can I protect people outside the home?

- The sick person should not have visitors other than caregivers. A phone call is safer than a visit.
- Unless necessary for medical care or an emergency, sick people should stay home and away from others as much as possible, and until at least 24 hours after fever is gone. (Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine).
- If the sick person must leave home, they should wear a facemask (if available and tolerable). If not facemask is worn, to cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with a tissue or with their sleeve or elbow (do not use hands).