

# Flu Home Care Guidance

*You will probably be sick for several days with fever and respiratory symptoms.*

## TAKE MEDICATIONS AS PRESCRIBED

- Continue to cover your cough and wash your hands often, even when taking antiviral medications, to prevent spreading influenza to family and friends.
- Call the office if you (or your child) experience any side effects; e.g., nausea, vomiting, rash, or unusual behavior.
- Take medications for symptom relief as needed for fever and pain such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®), and cough medicine. These medicines do not need to be taken regularly if your symptoms improve.
- Do not give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) or products that contain aspirin (e.g., bismuth subsalicylate – Pepto-Bismol®) to children or teenagers 18 years old or younger.
- Children younger than 4 years of age should not be given over-the-counter cold medications without first speaking with a healthcare provider.
- Take all prescribed medication as directed.

## SEEK EMERGENCY CARE

**If your child experiences any of the following:**

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- 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 a fever and a cough that is more severe
- Has other conditions (like heart or lung disease, diabetes, or asthma) and develops flu-like symptoms, including a fever and/or cough

**In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:**

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with a fever and worse cough

## FOLLOW THESE HOME CARE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.)
- Keep away from others as much as possible. This is to keep from making others sick.
- Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.
- Dishes can be done in dishwasher or with hot soapy water.
- 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.
- Have everyone in the household wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Alcohol-based hand cleaners\* are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way.

**For more detailed information about flu home care, visit [cdc.gov/flu](https://www.cdc.gov/flu) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.**