



What To Do If You Get Sick: Seasonal and H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu)

We want you to have the latest information on influenza (flu). This information can help you to best protect yourself, your family, and people you care for.

How do I know if I have the flu?

Flu symptoms may include a combination of:

- high fevers
- sore throat
- cough
- tiredness
- upset stomach
- headaches
- muscle aches



What should I do if I get sick?

If you get sick with flu-like symptoms this flu season, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care. Most people with 2009 H1N1 have had mild illness and have not needed medical care or antiviral drugs and the same is true of seasonal flu.

Flu can be a more serious illness for some people. That list includes the following groups:

- People 65 years or older
- People with a chronic medical condition
- People with a weakened immune system
- Pregnant women.

If you are in one of these groups with flu symptoms, it is important to contact your health care provider.

Do not go to the Emergency Department if you have mild symptoms. If you are going to your medical provider's office, call to discuss your symptoms before you make an appointment. Most people will recover from flu without needing any type of tests or specific treatment.

What are the emergency warning signs?

Some warning signs that require immediate medical attention include:

In adults

- Difficulty with breathing or shortness of breath
- Fever for more than 5 days
- Pain or pressure in the chest
- Fainting
- Confusion
- Severe vomiting
- If flu-like symptoms improve and then return with fever and worse cough



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

Are there medicines to treat 2009 H1N1?

Yes. There are drugs your doctor may prescribe for treating both seasonal and 2009 H1N1. They are called “antiviral drugs.” These drugs can make you better faster. They may also prevent serious complications. This flu season, antiviral drugs are being used mainly to treat people who are very sick. This includes:

- People who need to be hospitalized
- Sick people who are more likely to get serious flu complications

Your health care provider will decide whether antiviral drugs are needed to treat your illness. Remember, most people with 2009 H1N1 have had mild illness. They have not needed medical care or antiviral drugs. The same is true of seasonal flu.

How long should I stay home if I am sick?

Stay home from work or school for at least 24 hours after your fever ends. Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.



What should I do while I am sick?

If you are ill with flu symptoms:

- Avoid contact with other people as much as possible to limit the spread of flu
- Drink plenty of fluids, get bed rest, and continue to eat healthy foods
- Be sure to cover your mouth if you cough or sneeze and wash your hands often
- Seek medical attention if your flu symptoms are serious

The most important thing you can do to protect yourself, your family, and the people you care for is to get your flu shot as soon as possible.

Stay informed about the flu through the websites listed below:

Montefiore Medical Center
www.montefiore.org

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

The New York City Department Of Health and Mental Hygiene.
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/flu/flu.shtml>