

How to Take Care of Someone with the Flu and When to Seek Medical Care

Supplies to have on hand:

- A thermometer that does not contain mercury
- Non-aspirin pain relievers such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, etc.)
- Cough syrup
- Drinks - fruit juice, sports drinks'
- Light food - clear soups, crackers, applesauce, popsicles
- Phone number of family health care provider

Symptoms of the flu include:

- Fever (102° -104°), lasting 3 - 5 days
- Headache, severe muscle and joint aches
- Sore throat
- Tiredness, can be extreme and last 2 weeks or more
- Dry cough
- Runny or stuffy nose

What to do if you have flu symptoms:

- Rest in bed
- Drink lots of fluids (water or juice)
- Take non-aspirin pain relievers to reduce fever and pain (Never give aspirin to children or teens with fever - they can get a serious disease called Reye syndrome.)
- Stay home and avoid public activities for at least 5 days (7 days for children), so that you don't pass the flu to other people

If you are at risk for complications from the flu, call a health care provider as soon as you have flu-like symptoms.

People at risk for complications from the flu include:

- Infants and young children
- People 65 years of age and older
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic medical conditions such heart or lung disease, diabetes and people whose immune system is weakened because of disease or medicine.

Call for help immediately if:

- Breathing is fast, difficult or painful
- The skin is dusky or bluish in color
- The person has chest pain
- The person is disoriented
- The person is unable to walk or sit up, or function normally (others might be the first to notice this, especially in elderly people)

Call a health care provider if:

- The fever lasts more than 3 - 5 days
- The fever or cough goes away for 24 hours or more, and then returns
- There is yellow mucous with the cough
- The person is not able to drink enough fluids (urine is dark or has not urinated for 12 or more hours)

Call a health care provider if your infant or child has any of the symptoms above, or if he or she:

- Still "acts sick" once the fever is gone
- Looks very sick or is unusually drowsy or fussy
- Has a stiff neck, severe headache, severe sore throat, severe earache or unexplained rash, or has repeated vomiting or diarrhea
- Has a fever and has had a seizure
- Gets the flu and has a weakened immune system because of disease or medicine.

If you visit an area with bird flu, call a health care provider right away if:

- You get a fever and cough, or have difficulty breathing, within 10 days of returning from an area with bird flu.
- You develop these problems after contact with a sick person who has recently traveled to an area with bird flu.

Be prepared to tell the health care provider about your symptoms, where you traveled, and if you had close contact with poultry.