

Preventing the Spread of Flu

Most patients with pandemic flu will be able to remain at home during the course of their illness and can be cared for by others in the household. This information is intended to help you care for ill persons in the home, both during a typical flu season and during a flu pandemic.

PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS IN THE HOME

What Caregivers Can Do

- Physically separate influenza patients from other people as much as possible.
- Designate one person in the household as the main caregiver for the ill person.
- Watch for influenza symptoms in other household members.
- Wearing surgical masks may help decrease the spread of influenza when worn by the patient and/or caregiver during close contact (within 3 feet). If masks are worn, to be useful they must be worn at all times when in close contact with the patient.

What Everyone in the Household Can Do

- Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand cleanser after each contact with an influenza patient or with objects in the area where the patient is located.
- Don't touch your eyes, your nose, or your mouth without first washing your hands for 20 seconds. Wash hands before and after using the bathroom.
- Wash soiled dishes and eating utensils used by a flu patient either in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap.
- Soiled linen and laundry used by a patient can be washed in a standard washing machine with warm or cold water and detergent. Wash hands with soap and water after handling soiled laundry.

- Place tissues used by the ill patient in a bag and throw away with other household waste.
- Clean counters and other areas in the home regularly using everyday cleaning products.

PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS IN THE COMMUNITY

- Stay at home if you are sick.
- If the ill person must leave home, he or she should wear a surgical mask, if available, and take the following steps:
 - Cover the mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, using tissues or the crook of the elbow instead of the hands.
 - Use tissues to contain mucous and watery discharge from the mouth and nose.
 - Dispose of tissues in the nearest waste bin after use or carry a small plastic bag for used tissues.
 - Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand cleanser after covering a cough or sneeze, wiping your nose, and handling contaminated objects.
- Only people who are essential for patient care or support should enter a home where someone is ill with pandemic flu unless they have already had the illness.

Know the symptoms of flu, which may include:

- Sudden onset of illness
- Fever higher than 100.4° F (38° C)
- Chills
- Cough
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Stuffy nose
- Muscle aches
- Feeling of weakness and/or exhaustion
- Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain



