

Instructions for Suspected, Probable and Confirmed Swine Influenza Cases (Home Isolation Instructions for Patients & Close Contacts)

You are suspected of having swine flu, or you were diagnosed recently with swine flu. Swine flu is also being called influenza A H1N1 or H1N1 Flu.

During the time that you have symptoms — especially fever — it's possible for you to spread this virus to people who have close contact with you (someone living with you, or caring for you, for example).

To help prevent spreading the flu virus to your close contacts, the Health Department is asking you to stay at home for 7 days after the first day you started having a fever, or 24 to 48 hours after all off your symptoms are gone — whichever is longer.

What you should do:

Stay at home for 7 days after the first day of fever or at least 24 to 48 hours after all symptoms are gone — whichever is longer.

- Stay away from others as much as possible. Avoid close contact such as hugging or kissing, do not share toothbrushes, cigarettes, or drinks with other people. Anyone else living in the home with you should limit contact with you the best they can.
- Think about making just one person the main person who will care for you while you're sick — and be sure that person is not pregnant.
- Try to not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth before touching things. Germs spread this way.
- Stay in a room that is separate from the common areas of the house, if that's possible. (Use a spare bedroom, for example.)
- Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose. Throw your used tissues in the trash.
- Always wash your hands well with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand rubs after coughing, sneezing, or throwing a used tissue in the garbage. Throw out your used tissues with your regular trash.
- Cleaning surfaces that are touched often may help prevent spreading the flu. (Think about door knobs or any objects that you may sneeze or cough on.) Clean all hard surfaces such as bedside tables, bathroom surfaces, door knobs, and children's toys with a standard household disinfectant. If you can see that a surface is dirty, use a household cleaner first, then a disinfectant. Wash your hands after cleaning the area.
- Wash dirty dishes and eating utensils in a dishwasher, or by hand with warm water and soap.
- Wash laundry in a standard washing machine with warm or cold water and detergent. Tumble-dry linens and towels on a hot setting. You don't have to separate dirty linen and laundry from other household laundry.

Instructions for household members or other close contacts:

- Monitor yourself and watch others closely for developing flu-like symptoms. If you get sick with fever, cough, or sore throat, stay at home and take the same precautions listed above.
- Sick people should not have visitors while they are ill with the flu, or a flu-like illness.
- Anyone who does not live with the person who is sick, but must enter the home, should avoid contact with the sick person.
- Try to not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Everyone in the household — especially those who must come in close contact with the person who is sick — should wash hands often and well with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand rub often, and after every contact with the person who is sick.
- If you are doing laundry for the person who is sick, avoid “hugging” laundry before washing it, and keep it away from your face. Wash hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand rub right after handling dirty laundry.
- Close contacts may consider using a face mask (surgical mask) or an N95 respirator. You can buy these at a pharmacy or hardware store. If you use a re-usable fabric facemask, wash it with normal laundry detergent, and tumble-dry on a hot setting.

The Red Cross flyer ***Home Care for Pandemic Flu*** gives practical information that is helpful for any type of influenza, including the new H1N1 (swine flu) strain.

If I am sick, do I need to take medicine?

Your doctor may prescribe a medicine called either Tamiflu™ or Relenza™. You should also rest, drink plenty of liquids, and take medications that you would normally take to treat your symptoms, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. People younger than 18 years old should NOT take aspirin or aspirin-containing products (e.g., Pepto-Bismol™), as this can cause a rare serious illness called Reye’s Syndrome in young people with the flu.

What should I do if my symptoms get worse?

If your symptoms get worse, especially if you start to have trouble breathing, call your doctor or seek help at an emergency room. When going to the doctor’s office or the emergency room, have a family member or friend drive you in a private car. Do NOT take public transportation such as a bus.

If you’re planning to go to your doctor, call before you leave home and tell the doctor you have flu-like symptoms. When you get to your doctor’s office, go straight to the receptionist or triage nurse to tell you what to do while you wait to see the doctor. You may be asked to wear a mask, and you should sit away from others as much as possible. If you call an ambulance to take you to the hospital, let the call taker know that you have flu-like symptoms when you call 9-1-1, and let the ambulance crew know when they arrive.

For more information, visit these websites or dial 2-1-1.