

Home Care for Pandemic Flu

When many people get a disease at the same time, it is called a pandemic. Pandemic flu is caused when people get sick or infected from a **new** flu virus that had not been harmful to people before. This type of flu spreads easily from person to person and can cause many people to become very ill or die.

If you are caring for a loved one during a pandemic, take steps to protect yourself and others. Listen for information on how to care for a person ill with pandemic flu from local and state officials.

The signs of seasonal flu are fever, cough, runny nose and muscle pain. The signs of pandemic flu are the same, but they may be more severe and affect more people. If you or a loved one has signs of pandemic flu, stay home and avoid contact with others. The flu virus is spread when contaminated droplets leave the mouth and nose of an infected person and the virus comes in contact with others.

Gather these supplies to prepare for pandemic flu:

- Thermometer
- Surgical masks (one for each person)
- Soap
- Alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Paper towels
- Tissues
- A disinfectant cleaner or a cleaner with bleach
- A box of disposable gloves
- Cans of soup and broth
- Fluids with electrolytes and vitamins such as sports drinks like Gatorade and Powerade
- Fever reducing medicine such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen

Caring for a Loved One

- Call your doctor to report your loved one's flu signs. Your doctor will give you advice about home care or tell you if emergency care is needed.
- Write down the date, time, fever, signs, medicines given and dosage. Make a note when his or her signs change.

- Give plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration, which can be serious. Make sure the ill person drinks plenty of fluids, ice and foods such as soup and broth at the first sign of the flu. If your loved one has diarrhea or vomiting, give fluids that contain electrolytes and vitamins such as sports drinks like Gatorade and Powerade.
- If fluids make nausea worse, give one sip at a time until his or her nausea improves.
- Medicines to ease the signs of the flu, such as antiviral medicines, may be ordered by your doctor.
- To help reduce a fever give:
 - Plenty of fluids.
 - Fever reducing medicine, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 20 years old.
 - A sponge bath with lukewarm water.
- Be sure all family members get enough rest. Avoid use of alcohol and tobacco products to stay healthy.

Call your doctor again if your loved one has:

- A fever over 105°F (40.5°C) for adults or children over 2 years
- A fever over 103°F (39.4°C) for babies 3-24 months
- A rectal temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher for babies younger than 3 months
- Shaking chills
- A cough that produces thick mucus
- Signs of dehydration such as dry mouth or great thirst
- Worsening of other medical conditions such as heart disease or diabetes

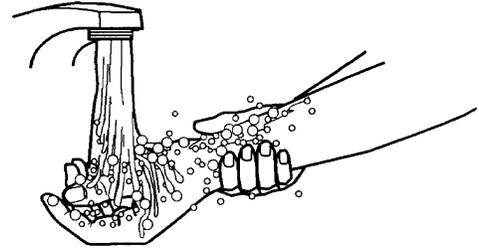
Call 911 or go to the emergency department if your loved one has:

- Confusion
- Problems with breathing or chest pain
- Bluish skin
- Stiff neck
- Not able to move an arm or leg
- Seizures

To prevent the spread of the flu virus to others:

- Have the infected person and caregiver wear a surgical mask.

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water before and after providing care or touching items that may have germs on them.
 - Wash your hands briskly for 15 seconds.
 - Clean under your nails.
 - Use paper towels to dry your hands so you do not spread germs on shared towels.
 - Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet.
 - Apply alcohol based hand sanitizer. Put enough liquid on your hands to moisten the front and back of your hands and fingers. Rub the liquid briskly like you are washing your hands. Be sure to moisten between your fingers. Rub your hands 15-30 seconds or until your hands are dry.



- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze to prevent spreading germs to those around you. Throw away the tissue and wash your hands. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your shoulder or arm.



- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Keep everyone's personal items separate.
- Avoid sharing items such as food or eating utensils, toys, computers, pens, papers, clothes, towels, sheets or blankets, unless they are disinfected.
- Clean surfaces such as countertops, sinks, faucets, doorknobs, telephones and light switches with a disinfectant cleaner or a cleaner with bleach. You can also mix your own water and bleach solution. Mix ten parts water with one part bleach.
- Use detergent and very hot water to wash dishes or clothes. Dishes used by sick people can be safely washed with dishes used by others if detergent and very hot water are used. The same is true for washing laundry.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning up body fluids then wash your hands.

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