

Caring for Loved Ones at Home During an Influenza Pandemic

You may need to care for ill people at home. This guide can help you protect yourself and others from getting sick.

Basic steps to providing good care:

1. Prevent the spread of infection

- a. Wash your hands often;
 - Especially after touching the ill person or items in their room that have nose or mouth secretions, vomit, feces or urine on them
 - This is the best way to prevent spreading infections!
- b. Wash your hands with:
 - Liquid soap and water (Bar soap can spread germs; if you only have bar soap, do not share the bar with the ill person)
 - OR
 - Alcohol-based hand rub if your hands do not have dirt or food on them
- c. Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth before you wash your hands. Viruses can enter your body through these body areas and make you sick.

2. Be sure the sick person drinks enough fluids. (See “Preventing Dehydration” fact sheet.)

- a. This is the most important thing you can do for the sick person.
- b. Know the signs of dehydration.

3. Try to keep the ill person comfortable.

Give a bed bath if needed. (See “Giving a Bed Bath” fact sheet.)

4. The ill person must cough or sneeze into their sleeve or use a tissue

Care givers should cover their cough/sneeze too!

5. Check the ill person’s vital signs and keep a record (See “Monitoring Vital Signs” fact sheet):

- a. Pulse, breathing rate, temperature, weight, and blood pressure (if possible).
- b. Check at same time every day.
- c. Check when symptoms change.

6. When to call a health care provider:

Watch for worsening illness and call a healthcare provider immediately if the ill person:

- Has difficulty breathing or chest pain
- Has gray/blue lips or skin.
- Has fever above 104° F (101° F for a child) that cannot be reduced.
- Has severe or persistent vomiting.
- Has a sign of dehydration.
- Has seizures or uncontrolled movements
- Is unable to move an arm or leg.
- Is confused or not waking up.
- Improves and then symptoms return.

Your health care provider’s phone:

Your emergency number:



Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Prevention and Control
 P.O. Box 64975
 St. Paul, MN 55164-0975
 651-201-5414, 1-877-676-5414
www.health.state.mn.us