

Help Prevent the Spread of the Flu Virus

There are many things that the members of our community can do to help prevent the spread of both the seasonal and H1N1 flu viruses. Following these guidelines will help reduce the risk of getting the flu, as well as spreading it.

- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water or clean your hands with alcohol-based gel. Hand-washing is the best way to prevent the spread of any infection.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue away. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes after touching common surfaces, such as doorknobs, dining tables, etc.
- If you have the flu – stay home – do not go to work, school, public places like shopping malls, grocery stores, and social gatherings.
- If you have the flu - call your primary care physician. Your physician can determine if your symptoms require a visit to the doctor's office.
- If you have the flu – do not go to the emergency room, unless you or your child has the warning signs listed below**. You will be spreading flu germs to ER patients and you will expose yourself to other illnesses.

- If you have the flu - drink clear fluids like water, broth and sports drinks to avoid dehydration, take over-the-counter pain relievers and flu medications, eat healthy and get plenty of rest.
- Plan ahead. There are items that you can keep on hand during the flu season so that you will not have to leave your home if you get the flu. These items include bottled water, canned or bottled fruit juices, non-perishable food such as canned meats, fish, poultry, soup, beans, and vegetables, cereal, crackers, peanut butter, protein bars, tissues, toilet paper, a two-week supply of prescription medications, and over-the-counter pain relievers and cold and flu medications.
- Keep a sick family member away from others as much as possible, especially those at risk for complications from the flu. If possible, have the sick person use a separate bathroom, and clean it daily with disinfectant. Wash your hands after leaving the sick family member's room.

Do You Have the Flu?

Colds and allergies can share similar symptoms of the flu. The flu symptoms, listed below, can typically be treated on an outpatient basis, and do not require a trip to your doctor.

Seasonal and H1N1 Flu Symptoms

- Fever (over 100)
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Runny or Stuffy Nose
- Body Aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea and vomiting have also been reported in some cases.

****However, if you have these emergency warning signs, you need urgent medical attention.**

In Adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

In Children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough