

Home Care for Flu-Like Illness

(Guidelines for Patients and Parents from the CDC)

If medications are prescribed:

- Take all medications as directed.
- Cover your cough and wash your hands often, even if taking antiviral medications, to prevent spreading flu to others.
- Call your health care provider if you (or your child) have any side effects, such as nausea, vomiting, rash, or unusual behavior.
- Take medications for symptom relief as needed for fever and pain, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol[®]) and ibuprofen (Advil[®], Motrin[®], Nuprin[®]), and cough medicine. These medicines do not need to be taken regularly if your symptoms improve.
- Do **not** give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) or products that contain aspirin (e.g. bismuth subsalicylate – Pepto Bismol) to children or teenagers 18 years old or younger.
- Children under 4 years should not be given over-the-counter cold medications without first speaking with a health care provider.

Seek emergency care if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- So irritable that he/she does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever that does not respond to medication

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Trouble 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
- Fever that does not respond to medication

Follow these home care recommendations:

- You may be sick for several days with fever and respiratory symptoms. **Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone** except to get medical care or other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.)
- Keep away from others as much as possible to prevent making others sick.
- Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, or electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.
- Dishes can be done in dishwasher or with hot soapy water.
- Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by the sick person in the trash. Wash your hands after touching used tissues and similar waste.
- Have everyone in the household wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also work well.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem. Aurora Health Care is a not-for-profit health care provider and a national leader in efforts to improve the quality of health care.