

Garrett County Health Department

Home Care and Treatment of Influenza

- **Understand that most people do not need more than time, liquids-by-mouth, and over-the-counter medicines to recover from this flu.**
- **If a person is pregnant or has a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema, check with their health care provider about any special care they might need.**

Prevent Dehydration & Boost your Immune System

- Keep from becoming dehydrated by drinking clear liquids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants).
- Get plenty of rest and try to eat well to boost the immune system.
- **Most people do not need antiviral drugs to fully recover from the flu.** However, persons at higher risk for severe flu complications, or those with severe flu illness or who might require hospitalization, might benefit from antiviral medications. Check with your health care provider about whether they need to take specific antiviral medications.

Watch for Emergency Warning Signs

Get medical care right away if the sick person at home:

- has difficulty breathing or chest pain
- has purple or blue discoloration of the lips
- is vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
- has signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination, or in infants, a lack of tears when they cry
- has seizures (for example, uncontrolled convulsions)
- is less responsive than normal or becomes confused

Treat Symptoms (fever & aches) with over-the-counter medications:

Warning! Do *not* give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to children or teenagers who have the flu.

Fever and aches can be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol®), ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®) or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS). Examples of these kinds of medications include:

Generic Name	Brand Name(s)
Acetaminophen	Tylenol®
Ibuprofen	Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®
Naproxen	Aleve

- Check ingredient labels on over-the-counter cold and flu medications to see if they contain aspirin, and do not use these for treating children or teenagers.
- Children 5 years of age and older and teenagers with the flu can take medicines *without* aspirin, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®), to relieve symptoms.
- Children younger than 4 years of age should **NOT** be given over-the-counter cold medications without first speaking with a health care provider.
- The safest care for flu symptoms in children younger than 2 years of age is using a cool-mist humidifier, and a suction bulb to help clear away mucus from the nose.
- Over-the-counter cold and flu medications used according to the package instructions may help lessen some symptoms such as cough and congestion. Importantly, these medications will not lessen how infectious a person is.

Check the ingredients on the package label of any cold and cough medication to see if these medication already contain acetaminophen or ibuprofen before taking additional doses of these latter medications—don't double dose! Patients with kidney disease or stomach problems should check with their health care provider before taking any NSAIDS.

Control the Spread of the Disease:

- Keep away from others as much as possible. This is to keep from making others sick. Do not go to work or school while ill
- Stay home for at least 24 hours after fever is gone, except to seek medical care or for other necessities. (Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- Cover coughs and sneezes. Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.*
- Wear a facemask – if available and tolerated – when sharing common spaces with other household members to help prevent spreading the virus to others. This is especially important if other household members are at high risk for complications from influenza.

Reference: www.cdc.gov/H1N1

Vaccine Clinic schedules: www.garretthealth.org

Health Department Flu Information Lines: 301-334-7697, 301-334-7698 & 301-895-3113

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