

Home isolation fact sheet for the
Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza
Virus and caring for an ill person at home

P A N D E M I C

INFLUENZA

The most important ways to prevent the spread of germs:

- Clean your hands often with soap and warm water.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your arm when you sneeze or cough.
- Contain your illness by staying home when you are sick.

Home isolation means keeping people who have an illness away from healthy people to stop the spread of the illness. Home isolation is needed to prevent or limit the spread of H1N1 flu virus to other people.

When you are on home isolation remember to:

- Avoid direct contact with others in your home. Remain at home in a separate room away from others for **7 days** from when you start to feel sick.
- If possible limit your contact to only one person.
- If someone is within 2 meters (6 feet) of you, wear a mask or cover the mouth and nose with a tissue **and safety glasses**.
- **Everyone** living in the house should clean their hands often for at least 15 seconds in warm soapy water or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Keep the door to your room closed and the window open, if possible.
- If you are sick do not leave your house during isolation, unless you are seeking medical care. If you **MUST** go to the doctor or hospital, call before you go to let them know you are coming. You should wear a mask or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue going outside.
- Discourage visits from people who do not live in the house.
- Promptly throw away any tissues or any articles that come in contact with fluid from your nose, mouth, or eyes.
- Clean the phone or other surface with a bleach-based cleaner after use by the ill person as the virus can survive on a hard surface for up to 2 days.



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- Do not share personal items such as towels, drinking cups, cutlery, toothbrush, etc. Other family members can use dishes and cutlery that are properly washed in hot soapy water or in your dishwasher. They do not need to be thrown away.

Caring for someone with H1N1 flu virus includes treating the fever, cough, aches and pains. The sick person should follow the usual guidelines for taking care of themselves when ill. Rest, drink plenty of fluids, and take fever reducing medication for fever and pain. Taking cough medicine, decongestants and/or sore throat lozenges may help to relieve symptoms. Children under 16 years should not be given ASA, commonly known as aspirin, because it can cause complications.

If the symptoms worsen - Clinicians, patients and those providing home-based care need to be alert to danger signs that can signal progression to more severe disease.

- shortness of breath, either during physical activity or while resting
- difficulty in breathing
- turning blue
- bloody or colored sputum
- chest pain
- altered mental status
- high fever that persists beyond 3 days
- low blood pressure

In **children**, danger signs include fast or difficult breathing, lack of alertness, difficulty in waking up and little interest in play.

Pregnant women should avoid contact with sick persons. If a pregnant woman becomes ill she should contact her health care provider or the *Healthline*.

Call the *Healthline* 1-888-709-2929, your health care provider or your local emergency department. If you have to visit one of these health care professionals call first and let them know that you have H1N1 Flu virus. You should wear a mask or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue going outside.

If someone else in the house gets sick with a **cough and fever** and flu-like symptoms (aches, tiredness and sore throat) they should **STAY AT HOME** and avoid contact with others, unless seeking medical attention. Call the *Healthline* 1-888-709-2929, or your health care provider. If you have to visit one of these health care professionals call first and let them know that you are a household contact of someone with H1N1 Flu virus. To help prevent spread of the flu, avoid contact with others or wear a mask if available when traveling outside the home.

