
HOME CARE GUIDE FOR INFLUENZA

Symptom and care log, Infection control measures for the home

A person with influenza will often become ill very suddenly. Fever and the worst symptoms often last 3 days, but sometimes last as many as 8 days. The person may feel weak, tired, or less energetic than normal for weeks afterward, and may have a long-lasting hacking cough.

Common symptoms:

- Fever—low (99 F) to high (104 F), usually for 3 days, but may persist for 4 to 8 days. Sometimes fever will go away and return a day later.
- Extreme fatigue
- Muscle and body aches
- Feeling very cold or having shaking chills
- Joint aches
- Headache (may be severe)
- Eye pain
- Sore throat
- Stuffed nose or runny nose
- Dry cough initially, may become a deep, hacking, and painful cough over the course of several days
- No appetite for food or desire to drink fluids

Supplies to have on hand:

- Thermometer
- Acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Cough suppressants/cough syrup
- Drinks—fruit juices, sports drinks, soda, tea
- Light foods—clear soups, crackers, applesauce
- Blankets; warm covers

Caring for a person with influenza:

- Comfort measures
 - Have the patient rest in bed.
 - Allow the sick person to judge the amount of bed covers needed; when fever is high the person may feel very cold and want several blankets.
 - Give acetaminophen (Tylenol or other brand names) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, or other brand names) according to the package label or a health care provider's direction to reduce fever, headache, and muscle, joint or eye pain.
- Fluids—give frequently, extremely important to replace body fluids that are lost as a result of fever.
- Feeding
 - Give light foods as the person wants; fluids are more important than food especially in the first days when the fever may be highest.

When to seek additional medical advice:

- If the person is short of breath or breathing rapidly at rest
- If the person's skin is dusky or bluish in color
- If the person is disoriented ("out of it")

- If the person is so dizzy or weak that standing is difficult (in a person who was able to walk before the illness)
 - If the person has not urinated in 12 or more hours
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