

Cold and Flu, What To Do?

Do I Have a Cold or the Flu?

The cold and flu are both respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different types of viruses. **Flu symptoms** usually come on quickly (within three to six hours) and consist of a fever, body aches, dry cough and extreme tiredness. **Cold symptoms** are less severe and people experience a stuffy nose, productive cough, slight tiredness and limited body aches.

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rare in adults and older children• Can be as high as 102F in infants and small children	Can range from 102 F to 104 F and usually lasts three to four days
Headache	Rare	Sudden onset and can be severe
Muscle Aches	Mild	Usual, and often severe
Tiredness and Weakness	Mild	Often extreme, and can last two or more weeks
Extreme Exhaustion	Never	Sudden onset that can be severe
Runny Nose	Often	Sometimes
Sneezing	Often	Sometimes
Sore Throat	Often	Sometimes
Cough	Mild hacking cough	Usual, and can be severe



I Have the Flu ... Now What?

Most healthy people recover from the flu without complications. If you get the flu:

- **Stay at home** from work or school.
- Get lots of **rest, drink plenty of liquids** and **avoid using alcohol and tobacco**.
- There are **over-the-counter medications** to relieve the symptoms of the flu (but never give aspirin to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms, particularly fever).
- Remember that serious illness from the flu is more likely in certain groups of people including **people 65 and older, pregnant women, people with certain chronic medical conditions** and **young children**.
- **Consult your doctor early on (call ahead!) for the best treatment**, but also be aware of **emergency warning signs** that require urgent medical attention.

Emergency Warning Signs

Seek **emergency medical care** if you or someone you know is having any of the following warning signs.

In adults, warning signs include:

- **Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath**
- **Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen**
- **Sudden dizziness**
- **Confusion**
- **Severe or persistent vomiting**

Frick ~ Latrobe ~ Westmoreland ~ Westmoreland at Jeannette

Excela Health Call Center: 1-877-771-1234

www.excelahealth.org

Excela
Health

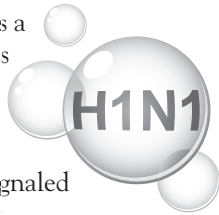
In children, warning signs include:

- 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

Remember: Seek emergency medical care if any of the warning signs are observed!

What About the H1N1 (Swine Flu)?

2009 H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This virus is spreading from person-to-person worldwide, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) signaled that a pandemic of 2009 H1N1 flu was underway.



With seasonal flu, symptoms vary in terms of timing, duration and

severity. Seasonal influenza can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. H1N1 flu has caused greater disease burden in people younger than 25 years of age than older people. At this time, there are few cases and few deaths reported in people older than 64 years old, which is unusual when compared with seasonal flu.

Spread of 2009 H1N1 virus is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu, and treatment and prevention are similar.

How Can I Prevent Getting the Flu?

The main way that influenza viruses spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning **one day before** symptoms develop and **up to five days after** becoming sick. Take the following actions to protect yourself and others from the flu:

- Take time to get **vaccinated**. This year, you will need a seasonal flu shot and the H1N1 when it becomes available.
- Take everyday **preventive actions**, including *covering your nose and mouth with a tissue* when you cough or sneeze, *washing your hands often* and *staying home* when you are sick with flu-like illness.
- Take flu **antiviral drugs** if your doctor recommends them.

How Do I Care for a Sick Person?

The following information can help you provide safer care at home for sick persons.

- **Check with your health care provider** about any special care they might need or whether they should take antiviral medications
- **Keep sick people away from others** as much as possible. They should stay home for at least 24 hours after fever is gone.
- Remind them to get **plenty of rest, drink clear fluids and cover coughs and sneezes**.
- Wear a **face mask** when sharing common spaces.
- Have everyone in the household **clean their hands often**, using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- **Throw away tissues and other disposable items** used by the sick person. **Wash your hands** after touching used tissues and similar waste.
- **Keep surfaces clean** by wiping them with a household disinfectant.
- **Linens, eating utensils and dishes** belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but importantly, these items should **not be shared** without washing thoroughly first.
- Be watchful for **emergency signs**.



For More Information ...

- Symptoms: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms.htm>
- Treatment: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/antiviral/index.htm>
- Taking Care of Yourself: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/takingcare.htm>
- H1N1 updates: <http://www.H1N1inPA.com>