

Pandemic FLU

OR

(H1N1 VIRUS)

SWINE FLU

What you need to know



Important note:

Hygiene is the most important step in preventing the spread of flu.

Pandemic Flu – is it different to the normal flu?

Yes it is a completely different type of flu. The symptoms are similar BUT we have no natural immunity to it. This means it can spread very quickly.

Can I avoid getting it?

It will be difficult to avoid. Here's how to reduce your risk:

- wash your hands regularly and thoroughly before preparing food and eating. Make sure you dry them well too. Soap and water for 20 seconds, then 20 seconds drying. Or use a hand sanitiser
- use a tissue to cover coughs and sneezes and dispose into a bin
- regularly clean surfaces in the bathroom and the kitchen
- stay away from people who are sick. Keep your distance - at least 1 metre
- if you become sick – stay at home.

What are the symptoms?

- Fever (a temperature ≥ 38 °C)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Stomach upset.

What do I do if I get it?

Use a tissue to cover coughs and sneezes and dispose into a bin.

If you become sick – stay at home until you are well again - that is you have stopped sneezing and coughing.

This is usually around three to four days after symptoms start, but may be up to a week. Let a relative or friend know if you are at home alone so that they can be ready to help if you need it.

What do I do if someone else at home gets the flu?

- Stay at home
- Get enough rest yourself
- Eat regularly
- Drink fluids regularly
- Exercise daily
- Avoid sleeping in the same room as a sick person
- See advice above to help care for someone with the flu.

Should I see my doctor?

If you think you have the flu, phone your doctor, health professional or Healthline (phone: 0800 611 116).

Making this call is particularly important if you:

- have an existing heart or lung disease or any chronic illness that requires regular medical attention
- are taking any medication that affect the immune system
- are pregnant
- start becoming more seriously unwell.

Treating yourself at home

- Rest in a separate, well ventilated room away from other people
- Don't share things like drinks
- Drink small amounts of fluids often
- Take medicines to relieve pain and fever (paracetamol or ibuprofen)
- Gargle a glass of warm water and/or suck sugarless hard sweets or lozenges to help with sore throats
- Use saline drops or nasal spray or decongestants to help clear blocked noses
- Shower or bath regularly
- Keep bedding and nightwear clean and dry if you are in bed
- Use skin balm or moisturiser to stop your lips from cracking
- Stay home until you are well.

Eating and drinking

- If you don't feel like eating or drinking, try light snacks such as soup or yoghurt
- If you aren't drinking enough, you may become dehydrated – drink small amounts often, try sucking an ice block or eating jelly.



What are the warning signs of it getting worse?

Seek medical attention if you have:

- been unwell for three or four days and are not getting any better or are feeling worse
- a high temperature that won't come down
- difficulty breathing
- pain or pressure in the chest or stomach
- been coughing up bloody or green phlegm
- blue skin around the lips and/or finger tips
- severe pain in the ear(s)
- severe vomiting
- difficulty waking up or feel disoriented or confused
- fits or uncontrollable shaking
- started to feel better but then get a high fever and start to feel unwell again.

When a baby or child in your care has the flu

Very young children and infants will probably have similar symptoms to adults, but may not explain what they are feeling. Younger children, especially under six months, may also have stomach pain, diarrhoea and/or vomiting.

When a baby or child has the flu, it is important to:

- care for the child in a separate, well-ventilated room away from other people in the house
- give paracetamol or ibuprofen in the dose recommended on the package (unless your doctor says otherwise). Aspirin should not be given to children under 14 years of age
- have them drink water, fruit juice or milk often. (If the child will not take fluids or is drowsy, don't force it. Seek medical or health professional advice immediately)
- dress them in lightweight clothing
- give them a lukewarm bath or shower to help cool any fever. (Cold baths or showers do not reduce temperature and will only distress the child)
- use saltwater drops (saline) to treat a stuffy nose
- keep the child at home and resting until they are well.

You should seek medical or nursing attention immediately if the baby or child in your care has any of the following symptoms.

For babies:

- breathing is fast or noisy, possibly with wheezing or grunting
- the area below ribs sucks inward (instead of expanding as normal) as the baby breathes in
- lips are blue
- body is limp or the baby is unable to move
- drowsy or difficult to wake
- severely irritable

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- has a seizure (convulsion/fit)
- not drinking enough fluids, the nappies remain dry or fewer than four wet nappies in 24 hours
- if the baby improves and then suddenly becomes worse.

For children:

- breathing is fast or noisy, possibly with wheezing or grunting
- the area below the ribs sucks inward (instead of expanding as normal) as a young child breathes in
- lips or skin are bluish or dark-coloured, particularly on fingers and toes
- difficult or impossible to wake your child, they are very drowsy
- severely irritable, not wanting to be held
- not drinking enough fluids
- not passing urine regularly (about every 6 hours when awake is normal)
- if the child improves and then suddenly becomes worse.

Older children and teenagers usually have the same symptoms as adults.

What about Tamiflu?

Tamiflu is an antiviral medicine and is normally only for people who could become more seriously ill from flu. Most people with flu will not need Tamiflu.

This type of medicine is generally most effective if taken within the first 48 hours of the first symptoms. It may reduce the length of time you have the flu – it is not a “cure”.

Working together for a healthier community



PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY
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For more details please visit:

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