

Does Someone at Home Have the Flu? Answer These Questions to Know What to Do!

KNOW what to do about the **FLU!**

Does the sick person have mainly upper respiratory symptoms (cough, sore throat, stuffy/runny nose) AND a fever of 100 degrees F or higher?

If your answer is “No,” it’s probably not the flu. Please note: if the sick person is an infant under 3 months old with a fever, the parent should call a health care provider. Also, young children with flu may be irritable or lethargic rather than having respiratory symptoms.

If your answer is “Yes,” it may be the flu. The person should stay home and rest, drink plenty of fluids and maybe use over-the-counter products to treat symptoms. There may be no need to see a health care provider. However, if symptoms get worse, call a health care provider, who can decide if the sick person needs prescription medicines called “antivirals.” Most people find that the flu goes away after a few days even without these medicines.

When should you see a doctor? If you can answer yes to any of the following, contact your health care provider immediately. (If at all possible, try to reach your own doctor or an urgent care center rather than going to a hospital emergency department.)

For Children – is the sick child:

- An infant less than 3 months with a fever
- A child over 3 months with fever and any of the following:
 - trouble breathing or fast breathing
 - not drinking well
 - not urinating as much as usual
 - bluish or gray skin color
 - irritable even after their fever goes down
 - not waking up normally or interacting normally
 - rash
 - severe vomiting or
 - a fever that goes down and flu symptoms get better, but then the fever and symptoms get worse again a day or two later

For Adults – call your doctor if your symptoms worsen or complications develop, including:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion or change in level of consciousness

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- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- An existing health care condition is now much worse

Call your doctor if the sick person is:

- A pregnant women
- Age 65 or older
- Living in a household with persons who have a serious medical condition or who are pregnant. Those individuals should call their health care provider for advice. They might need to receive antiviral drugs to prevent them from getting sick.
- A person with an underlying medical condition such as:
 - asthma
 - diabetes
 - heart disease
 - metabolic disease
 - kidney disease
 - sickle cell disease
 - neurologic disorder or other chronic condition or
 - is taking immunosuppressive medicine

If the sick person has mild flu symptoms:

- Remember, do not give cough or cold medicine to children under 4 years before checking with a health care provider.
- Do not give aspirin to someone under 19 years old.
- If the sick person takes medicine regularly for another condition, check with the person's health care provider to find out if there are any cough and cold products that he or she should not take.
- Be sure to read labels. Many over-the-counter products already contain aspirin or acetaminophen. Avoid taking double doses.
- Emergency departments (EDs) may be very overcrowded if there are a lot of flu cases in your area. The staff may not be able to take care of all those who are sick. Only people with serious illness should go to the ED.

More information about the flu is available at www.nyhealth.gov and www.flu.gov.