

Home Care for Pandemic Flu

A Pandemic is a disease that spreads all over the world and affects a large number of people. Caring for persons in your household who are ill may become necessary.

INFECTION CAN BE PASSED BEFORE A SICK PERSON HAS SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS

A person can have the flu and symptoms may not show up for a day or so. He or she can still pass the virus to others. Avoid these invisible germs.

- * Try to stay at least 3 feet from a person who is coughing or sneezing
- * Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- * Wash your hands often or use alcohol based hand sanitizer

FLU GERMS SPREAD MAINLY THROUGH COUGHS & SNEEZES

Coughs and sneezes can spray droplets through the air and,

- * Into the mouths or noses of people nearby
- * Onto surfaces that people touch before touching their nose, mouth or eyes
- * People with the flu can also leave the flu virus on things they touch if they have flu germs on their hands

HOME CARE DURING PANDEMIC FLU

- * Stay home from work, school, or other outings
- * As much as possible, distance ill persons from healthy family members
- * Spend most of the time resting
- * Drink plenty of fluids
- * Contact your health care professional if the person is not urinating in good amounts, urine is concentrated, or if they develop diarrhea
- * Check their temperature every 4 hours during the day and when awake
- * Give medications* to relieve symptoms as prescribed by your health care provider (antivirals, ibuprofen, or acetaminophen). Antibiotics don't cure the flu.

*** NEVER give aspirin or salicylates to anyone under age 20 unless directed by a physician**

- * A cool vaporizer may relieve symptoms of congestion and fever
- * Avoid alcohol and tobacco
- * Persons with chronic disease should be monitored closely by a health care professional
- * Every home should have a thermometer, disposable gloves, and over the counter medications on hand. Consider purchasing a cool mist vaporizer and protective masks also.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF FLU IN THE HOME

- * Keep everyone's personal items separate. Avoid sharing clothing, towels, sheets, blankets, food or eating utensils.
- * Disinfect door knobs and handles, switches, toys, computers, pens, and books
- * Wear disposable gloves when in contact with or cleaning up body fluids
- * If possible, one person should be the designated care giver

- * Use detergent and hot water to wash clothes and bedding. Wash your hands after handling laundry.
- * Dishes may be washed in the dishwasher on sanitary setting. If you are washing dishes by hand, use hot water and disinfecting solution.*

* Disinfecting solution:

1 gallon water, 1/4 cup household bleach. Mix a fresh batch every day. Use on hard surfaces or to rinse dishes.

COUGH & SNEEZE ETIQUETTE

- * Try to stay at least 3 feet away from other people
- * Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, then throw the tissue away
- * Use your upper sleeve, not your hand
- * Always wash your hands as soon as you cough or sneeze.

HAND HYGIENE

- * Wet hands with warm water
- * Lather both hands with soap
- * Scrub hands together for 20 seconds or approximately the time it takes to sing happy birthday twice. Scrub wrists, palms between fingers, under nails, and backs of hands
- * Rinse hands thoroughly. Use towel to shut off faucet
- * Dry hands completely with a clean towel
- * Alcohol based hand sanitizer can substitute for soap and water. Rub gel or wipe over both hands. Rub hands together until they feel dry.