

Infection Prevention & Control

- If the sick person must leave the home for medical care, he or she should cover the nose and mouth when coughing and/or sneezing and wear a loose-fitting mask, if available.
- Have the sick wear a mask in the home when in a common area of the house near other people.
- If possible, the sick person should use a separate bathroom, which should be cleaned daily with a household disinfectant cleaner

Protecting others in the home

- The sick person should not have visitors other than caregivers.
- If possible, have only one adult in the home take care of the sick person.
- Avoid having pregnant women care for the sick.
- Everyone in the household must practice diligent hand hygiene.
- Use disposable towels to dry hands.
- If possible, consideration should be given to maintaining good ventilation in shared households, e.g., keeping windows open in bathrooms.
- Again, antivirals can be prescribed to prevent the flu if people in the home should be medicated.

If you are the caregiver

- Avoid being face-to-face with the sick person.
- When caring for a child, place his/her chin on your shoulder to avoid having him/her cough in your face.
- Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often and after providing care.
- The caregiver should wear a mask when providing care to the sick person to avoid catching the flu and to avoid spreading the flu to others. If you must have close contact with the sick person, use a respirator mask, which can be purchased from a pharmacy or building/supply store.

DO NOT SHARE USED MASKS!

- Used face masks should be taken off and discarded in regular trash so they don't come in contact with anyone or anything.
- Avoid reusing disposable face masks. If cloth masks are used, they should be cleaned with a regular laundry cleaner and tumble-dried on hot setting.
- After removing face mask, clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
- Contact your health care provider about being prescribed an antiviral medication since you are a caregiver.
- Monitor yourself and other household members for signs and symptoms of flu.
- Spend as little time as possible with the sick person; avoid close contact (about 6 feet away) as much as possible.

Household cleaning, laundry, proper waste disposal

- Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by the sick in a trash container that is placed in their sickroom. Wash hands after touching waste items.
- Keep surfaces (bedside tables, bathroom surfaces, children's toys) clean by wiping them with a household disinfectant according to the product label.
- Linens, eating utensils and dishes belonging to the sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but it is vital that these items should not be shared without first washing thoroughly.
- Wash linens, bed clothes, towels, etc. by using household laundry soap, and tumble dry on a hot setting. Avoid holding soiled laundry against you to prevent contaminating yourself.
- Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or with hot soapy water and rinsed thoroughly.



A nonprofit community health care system

Altoona Hospital Campus

620 Howard Avenue
Altoona, PA 16601-4804
814.889.2011

Bon Secours Hospital Campus

2500 7th Avenue
Altoona PA 16602-2004
814.889.2011

www.altoonaregional.org

Infection Prevention & Control

About Suspected Swine-Origin Flu



A nonprofit community health care system

Infection Prevention & Control

What is swine-origin flu?

Swine influenza “A” virus infection (swine flu) can cause a wide range of symptoms, including fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue. People with swine flu can also have vomiting and diarrhea. People with chronic medical conditions might be more likely to develop a severe illness from swine flu infection, such as pneumonia, respiratory failure or even death.

How flu is spread

The main way influenza viruses are thought to spread is from person to person. This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are propelled through the air and deposited in the mouth or nose of people nearby. Influenza viruses may also be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or an object and then touches their own mouth or nose before washing their hands.

Most people with swine flu can remain at home and do not need to be hospitalized.

People with swine flu who are cared for at home should:

- Check with their health care provider about any special care they might need if they are pregnant or have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma or emphysema.

- Check with their health care provider about taking antiviral medications.
- Stay home for seven days after the start of the illness and fever is gone
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink clear fluids (water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from becoming dehydrated.
- Cover coughs and sneezes. Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often and especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into your hands.
- Avoid close contact with others — do not go to work or school while ill.
- Be watchful for emergency warning signs that might indicate you need to seek medical attention.

Medications to help lessen symptoms of the flu

Antiviral medications sometimes help reduce influenza symptoms but require a prescription. Most people do not need antiviral drugs to fully recover. However, those at higher risk for severe flu complications, or those with severe flu illness who require hospitalization, might benefit from antiviral medications.

Warnings!

- Do **NOT** give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to children or teenagers who have the flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye’s syndrome.
- Check ingredient labels on over-the-counter cold and flu medications to see if they contain aspirin.

- Teenagers with the flu can take medicines **WITHOUT** aspirin, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Nuprin®), to relieve symptoms.
- Children younger than 2 should not be given over-the-counter cold medications without speaking with a health care provider.
- The safest care for flu symptoms in children younger than 2 is using a cool-mist humidifier and a suction bulb to help clear away mucous.
- Fever and aches can be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Nuprin®) to relieve symptoms.

For adults only

- Over-the-counter cold and flu medications used according to the package instructions may help lessen some symptoms, such as cough and congestion. However they will **NOT** lessen how infectious a person is.
- Check the ingredients on the package label to see if the medication already contains acetaminophen or ibuprofen before taking these medications. Patients with kidney disease or stomach problems should check with their health care provider before taking these medications.

When to seek emergency medical care

Get medical care right away if the sick person at home:

- Has difficulty breathing or chest pain

- Has purple or blue lip discoloration
- Is vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
- Has signs of dehydration such as dizziness, absence of urination or in infants, a lack of tears when they cry.
- Has seizures (uncontrolled convulsions)
- Is less responsive than normal or becomes confused

Steps to reduce the spread of flu in the home

- Keep the sick person away from other people as much as possible
- Remind the sick to cover their coughs and to clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Have everyone in the household clean their hands often, using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Ask your health care provider if household contacts of the sick person, particularly those contacts that may have chronic health conditions, should be prescribed antiviral medications.

Placement of the sick at home

- Keep the sick in a room separate from common areas of the house. Keep the sickroom door closed.
- Unless necessary for medical care, the sick should not leave the home while they have a fever or when they are most likely to spread their infection (seven days after onset of symptoms in adults, and 10 days after onset of symptoms in children).