

Home Care for Pandemic Flu

Monitor Pandemic Flu Symptoms

Keep a care log. Write down the date, time, fever, symptoms, medicines given and dosage. Make a new entry at least every 4 hours or when the symptoms change. Call your healthcare professional again if your loved one has:

- **A high fever**
 - Children and Adults: Greater than 105°F (40.5°C)
 - Babies 3- to 24-months-old: 103°F (39.4°C) or higher
 - Babies up to 3 months: Rectal temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.
- **Shaking chills**
- **Coughing** that produces thick mucus
- **Dehydration** (feeling of dry mouth or excessive thirst)
- **Worsening of an existing serious medical condition** (for example: heart or lung disease, diabetes, HIV, cancer) If you cannot reach your health-care professional, **call 9-1-1** for any of the signs below:
 - Irritability and/or confusion
 - Difficulty breathing or chest pain with each breath
 - Bluish skin
 - Stiff neck
 - Inability to move an arm or leg
 - First-time seizure

Prevent Dehydration

Dehydration occurs when the body loses too much water and it is not replaced quickly enough. It can be serious. Begin giving soothing drinks at the first signs of the flu and follow these tips:

- In addition to plenty of liquids, give ice and light, easily digested foods, such as soup and broth.
- If your loved one has diarrhea or vomiting, give fluids that contain electrolytes. These are available at your pharmacy or grocery store. Or you can make your own rehydration electrolyte drink for someone over the age of 12.

Recipe for Electrolyte Drink: Mix 1 quart water, 1/2 tsp. baking soda, 1/2 tsp. table salt, 3 to 4 tbsp. sugar. 1/4 tsp. salt substitute. Flavor with lemon juice or sugar-free Kool-Aid®.

If drinking liquids makes nausea worse, give one sip at a time until your loved one can drink again.

Reduce Fever

To help reduce a fever, do the following:

- Give plenty of fluids.
- Give fever-reducing medication, such as acetaminophen, aspirin or ibuprofen, as directed on the container's label. Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 20.
- Keep a record of your loved one's temperature in your care log.
- To relieve discomfort, give a sponge bath with lukewarm water.

After you have called your doctor or emergency number for a fever, continue to follow the home treatment recommendations above. If there is a delay in getting help, ask a health-care professional if you should start an additional dose of an alternate fever- reducing medication (acetaminophen, ibuprofen or aspirin) between the doses described on the label. Always continue to give plenty of fluids.

Pandemic Flu Caregiving Supplies

- Thermometer
- Soap
- Box of disposable gloves
- Acetaminophen
- Ibuprofen
- Bleach
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Paper towels
- Tissues
- Surgical masks (one for each person)
- Sugar, baking soda, salt, salt substitute

For further information, go to www.redcross.org