

Home Nursing Care Pandemic Flu

If pandemic flu occurs, it may not be possible or necessary to go to the hospital for care. Talk to your family doctor if symptoms occur. Family members may have to care for loved ones at home. This fact sheet provides general information on the care of the sick.

Taking care of the caregiver:



- If possible, select one person to give care to the patient.
- Get plenty of sleep, eat well, and exercise.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, especially before and after caring for the sick persons and their personal items (dishes, glasses, tissues, bed linens). The caregiver may wear disposable gloves for added protection.
- Keep your hands away from your face and hair.
- You may have the flu for 24 hours before you feel sick. Consider home delivery of food and medicines to contain the flu.

Taking care of the sick:



- Give the sick person plenty of fluids (water, popsicles, diluted apple juice, etc.).
- Provide a leak-free waste container if the patient is nauseous.
- Keep the sick family member comfortable.
- Know signs and symptoms when the patient needs additional medical care.
- Have face masks available for sick family members who are coughing or sneezing.

What the patient can do:



- Use face masks when coughing or sneezing.
- Throw tissues and other items directly into waste basket.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Throw up in the toilet and change soiled linens and clothing.
- Stay home and in a small section of the house if possible.

General information:



- Clean with hot soapy water and/or disinfectants all surfaces that sick family members come in contact with, such as light switches, phones, toilets, sinks, and doorknobs.
- Do not carry used bed linens against your body. Wash in the hottest water possible, using regular laundry detergent. You may prefer to wash the patient's bed linens and clothing separately.
- Use a plastic bag in wastepaper baskets. This will make disposal easier and safer.
- Try to keep the sick away from healthy people.
- Avoid letting visitors into the home.
- Have a list of each family member's chronic health problems and any medicine they may be taking.
- Know the phone number of your family physician or nurse practitioner, hospital, and mortuary.
- Know where to send a deceased family member's body.
- Maintain a pandemic medicine kit (see below).

Pandemic Medicine Kit:



- Fever-reducers such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. **Do not give aspirin or aspirin products to children under the age of 3.**
- Anti-nausea and anti-diarrhea medicine
- Cough, cold, and flu medicines
- Once-a-day vitamins
- Prescribed medicine
- Emergency medicine such as glucose tablets for diabetics
- Blood pressure monitoring equipment
- Rectal and oral thermometers
- Face masks
- Hand sanitizer
- Alcohol

Check with your health care provider for medicine appropriate for you and your family.

Adapted for use in Kentucky from: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <http://www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan/sup4.html>, May 2006

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