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## **FLU LIKE ILLNESS**

**How Flu Spreads** The main way that influenza viruses are thought to spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are propelled through the air and deposited on 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 (or someone else's mouth or nose) before washing their hands.

If you or any of your family member are suffering from flu like symptoms kindly note the following:

### **1. PRACTICING GOOD HAND HYGIENE.**

- Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the best way to keep your hands from spreading the virus.
- Alcohol-based hand cleaners containing at least 60% alcohol are also effective.

### **2. PRACTICING RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE.**

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Put on a surgical mask to protect others.
- Put your used tissue in the waste basket.

### **3. HOME ISOLATION.**

- Stay home till all your symptoms subside (mainly fever and cough). Usually with antiviral treatment it takes 3 days and without treatment may be less than 7 days. Avoid traveling for at least 24 hours after fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink clear water to prevent dehydration.
- Wear facemask if available and tolerable when sharing common places with other household members, or when in need to leave the home for necessities. Also caregivers and high risk group need to wear it.
- Avoid close contact with others (not to go to work or school – report to your manager), no visitors.



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- Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by the sick person in the trash. Wash your hands after touching used tissues and similar waste.
- Keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.
- Linens, eating utensils, and dishes belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but importantly these items should not be shared without washing thoroughly first.
- Wash linens (such as bed sheets and towels) by using household laundry soap and tumble dry on a hot setting. Avoid “hugging” laundry prior to washing it to prevent contaminating yourself. Clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub right after handling dirty laundry.
- Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with water and soap.

4. **WATCH FOR EMERGENCY SIGNS** which indicate patient need to seek medical attention at the earliest. These are:

**ADULTS:**

- Danger signs: Alarming signs
- Shortness of breath, either during physical activity or while resting.
- Difficulty in breathing
- Turning blue
- Bloody or colored sputum
- Chest pain
- Altered mental status
- High fever that persist beyond 3 days
- Low blood pressure

**PAEDS:** Children danger signs include:

- Fast or difficult breathing
- Lack of alertness
- Difficulty in waking up
- Little or no desire to play
- Unable to drink or breast-feed
- Vomiting every thing
- Convulsions
- Chest in drawing or strider in a calm child



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5. Avoid having pregnant women care for the sick person. (Pregnant women are at increased risk of influenza-related complications and immunity can be suppressed during pregnancy).

#### To Know:

- Rapid test has low sensitivity and specificity.
- Tamiflu is not specific for treatment of H1N1 influenza.
- Influenza vaccines currently available do not protect against the present pandemic strains.