

Suggestions for Caregivers

If you are the caregiver:

- Avoid being face-to-face with the sick person.
- When holding small children who are sick, place their chin on your shoulder so that they will not cough in your face.
- Clean your hands with soap and water after you touch the sick person or handle used tissues, or laundry. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub
- If you are in a high risk group for complications from influenza, you should attempt to avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with household members who are sick with influenza. Designate a person who is not at high risk of flu associated complications as the primary caretaker of household members who are sick with influenza, if at all possible. If close contact with a sick individual is unavoidable, consider wearing a facemask or respirator, if available and tolerable.
- **Monitor yourself and household members for flu symptoms and contact a telephone hotline or health care provider if symptoms occur.**

Caring for a Sick Person at Home:

Special precautions are necessary if you are taking care of a sick person at home, especially if the person is an infant or child.

- Ask the person's healthcare provider about any special care that might be needed, especially if the person is pregnant or has a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema.
- Ask the patient's healthcare provider whether the patient should take antiviral medications.
- Keep the sick person away from other people as much as possible, especially others who are at high risk of complications from influenza.
- Remind the patient to cover coughs, and clean his/her hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often, especially after coughing and/or sneezing.
- Make sure everyone in the household cleans their hands often, using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Ask your healthcare provider if household contacts of the sick person—particularly those contacts who may have chronic health conditions—should take antiviral medications such as oseltamivir (brand name Tamiflu®) or zanamivir (brand name Relenza®) to prevent getting the flu.
- Get medical care right away if the patient
 - Has difficult breathing or chest pain
 - Has purple or blue discoloration of the lips
 - Is vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
 - Shows signs of dehydration, such as feeling dizzy when standing, being unable to urinate, or (in infants) crying without shedding tears
- Has seizures (for example, uncontrolled convulsions), or
- Is less responsive than normal or becomes confused

H1N1 and the Elderly:

- People 65 and older are not in a target group recommended to get the earliest doses of 2009 H1N1 vaccine. This is because people age 65 and older are least likely to get sick with the 2009 H1N1 virus. Because there will be limited amounts of vaccine available at first, the first doses are recommended for those who are most likely to get infected.
- While people 65 and older are not included in the groups recommended to get the earliest doses of vaccine, they can get the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine as soon as the high risk and younger groups have had the opportunity to be vaccinated.
- People 65 and older are prioritized to get *antiviral drugs* if they become sick with the flu according to CDC's guidance. It's very important that antiviral drugs be used early to treat flu illness in people 65 and older who are very sick (for example people who are in the hospital) and people who are sick with flu and who also have a greater chance of getting serious flu complications (see <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/highrisk.htm>).
- Although they are the least likely group to be infected with 2009 H1N1 flu, people age 65 and older are at higher risk for influenza related complications. Therefore, they are prioritized for antiviral treatment if they get sick with either seasonal or 2009 H1N1 flu this season.