

## Staying Home When Sick

If you are not feeling well, check your symptoms before coming to work. If you have a fever, chills, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches, headache, diarrhea, or vomiting, you may have the flu. Please do **NOT** come to work if you are sick with flu-like illness. Employees should discuss available leave options with their supervisor.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that **all** employees stay home if they are sick with flu-like illness until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medicines (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).

For those employees at a higher risk for complications from the flu and who are sick, they should contact their health care provider as soon as possible. Children younger than 5 years of age, pregnant women, people of any age with chronic medical conditions (such as pulmonary disease, asthma, diabetes, neuromuscular disorders, or heart disease), and people 65 years of age and older are more likely to get complications from the flu. Health care providers may prescribe antiviral drugs, and they are most effective when started within 2 days of getting sick.

Sick individuals should **stay at home until the end of the exclusion period**, to the extent possible, except when necessary to seek required medical care. Sick individuals should avoid contact with others. Keeping people with a fever at home may reduce the number of people who get infected, since elevated temperature is associated with increased shedding of influenza virus. CDC recommends this exclusion period regardless of whether or not antiviral medications are used. People on antiviral treatment may shed influenza viruses that are resistant to antiviral medications.

Many people with influenza illness will continue shedding influenza virus 24 hours after their fevers go away, but at lower levels than during their fever. Shedding of influenza virus can be detected for 10 days or more in some cases. Therefore, when people who have had influenza-like illness return to work, school, or other community settings they should continue to practice good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene and avoid close contact with people they know to be at increased risk of influenza-related complications. Because some people may shed influenza virus before they feel ill, and because some people with influenza will not have a fever, it is important that all people cover their cough and wash hands often. To lessen the chance of spreading influenza viruses that are resistant to antiviral medications, adherence to good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene is as important for people taking antiviral medications as it is for others.