

H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)

Patient Discharge Information

The H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) is a viral respiratory disease that usually affects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, airways and lungs). The symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue.

The H1N1 Flu is diagnosed by collecting a respiratory specimen. The specimen we collected from you was sent to a laboratory for testing of the H1N1 flu virus. You should receive your results in 2-3 days. Please read all of these instructions carefully. If you have any questions please ask the treating physician or call your primary care physician.

- ◆ Stay home for seven days after the start of the illness and fever is gone. Do not go to work or to school - you will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- ◆ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often and especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into your hands.
- ◆ Get plenty of rest.
- ◆ Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.
- ◆ If you were prescribed an antiviral medication such as Tamiflu or Relenza, please begin taking the medication as soon as possible. This medication is only useful if started in the first TWO days of the illness. You should finish taking all of the medication prescribed by the doctor, even if you feel better.
- ◆ It is very important that you NEVER take aspirin or aspirin-containing medicines during a case of influenza. Aspirin has caused Reye's Syndrome (liver failure) in this situation. Although this occurs more commonly in children, adults can also develop Reye's Syndrome. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) and/or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) are safe to use if you have the H1N1 Flu.

You should seek medical attention immediately, either here or at the nearest Emergency Department, if any of the following occurs:

- ◆ Shortness of breath, wheezing, or any problems breathing
- ◆ Worsening headache or stiff neck
- ◆ Lightheadedness or feeling faint
- ◆ Chest pain
- ◆ Recurrent cough and fever after symptoms have started to improve
- ◆ Vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
- ◆ If feeling sicker at any time, or if not improving as expected
- ◆ For any other new symptoms or concerns

Medications to help lessen the symptoms of the H1N1 Flu

Check with your healthcare provider or pharmacist for correct, safe use of medications.

Your doctor may have prescribed an antiviral medication to help lessen influenza symptoms. Most people do not need these antiviral drugs to fully recover from the flu. However, persons at higher risk for severe flu complications, or those with severe flu illness who require hospitalization, might benefit from antiviral medications. Ask your healthcare provider whether you need antiviral medication.

Warning! Do **not** take aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) if you have the flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome. For more information about Reye's syndrome, visit the National Institute of Health website at http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/reyes_syndrome/reyes_syndrome.htm.

- ◆ Check ingredient labels on over-the-counter cold and flu medications to see if they contain aspirin.
- ◆ You can take medicines **without** aspirin, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®), to relieve symptoms.
- ◆ Fevers and aches can be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®) or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS). Examples of these kinds of medications include:

Generic Name:

Acetaminophen
Ibuprofen
Naproxen

Brand Name:

Tylenol®
Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®
Aleve

- ◆ Over-the-counter cold and flu medications used according to the package instructions may help lessen some symptoms such as cough and congestion. Importantly, these medications will not lessen how infectious a person is.
- ◆ Check the ingredients on the package label to see if the medication already contains acetaminophen or ibuprofen before taking additional doses of these medications - don't double dose! Patients with kidney disease or stomach problems should check with their health care provider before taking any NSAIDS.