



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## Pike County General Health District

2009 H1N1 Influenza

### *How to Care for a Sick Person in your Home*

#### What to Do if You Become Ill

- Check with your health care provider about any special care you might need if you are pregnant or have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema
- Stay home and avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with others until you have not had a fever or signs of a fever for 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medications, except to seek medical care or for other necessities
- Get plenty of rest
- Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants)
- Cover coughs and sneezes. Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often and especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into hands
- Wear a facemask – if available and tolerable – when sharing common spaces with other household members especially those with increased risk for complications from the flu.
- Be watchful for emergency warning signs (listed below)

#### When to Seek Emergency Medical Care

##### *For Children:*

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

##### *For Adults:*

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

#### Medications to Help Lessen Flu Symptoms

**Antiviral Medications**—require a prescription. Most people do not need these antiviral drugs to fully recover from the flu. However, persons at higher risk for severe flu complications, or individuals who require hospitalization, might benefit from antiviral medications.

**Antibiotics** - Influenza infections can sometimes lead to or occur with bacterial infections. Therefore, some people will also need to take antibiotics. More severe or prolonged illness or illness that seems to get better, but then gets worse again may be an indication that a person has a bacterial infection.

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**Over-the-Counter Medications** - Fevers and aches can be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®) or naproxen (Aleve®). Cold and flu medications used according to the package instructions may help lessen some symptoms such as cough and congestion. 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!

### *Special Considerations for Children*

**Warning!** Do *not* give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to children or teenagers who have the flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.

- Children 5 years of age and older and teenagers with the flu can take medicines *without* aspirin, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®), to relieve symptoms.
- Children younger than 4 years of age should **NOT** be given over-the-counter cold medications without first speaking with a health care provider.
- The safest care for flu symptoms in children younger than 2 years of age is using a cool-mist humidifier and a suction bulb to help clear away mucus.

*Check with your health care provider, if you have any questions or concerns about medications.*

### **Other Important Tips**

- Keep the sick person in a room separate from the common areas of the house with the door closed.
- The sick person should not have visitors other than the caregiver. A phone call is safer than a visit.
- If possible, have only one adult (who is not pregnant or at risk for complications from influenza) take care of the sick person.
- Avoid having sick family members care for infants or other at-risk individuals.
- Use paper towels for drying hands after hand washing or dedicate a cloth towel to each family member.
- If possible, maintain good ventilation in shared household areas (e.g., keeping windows open in restrooms, kitchen, bathroom, etc.).
- When holding small children who are sick, place their chin on your shoulder so that they will not cough in your face.
- 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. Wash eating utensils and dishes thoroughly.
- 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 after handling dirty laundry.

*Information Provided Here is Based on Current CDC Recommendations as of August 12, 2009*  
For More Information Contact:

**Pike County General Health District @ [www.pike-health.org](http://www.pike-health.org) or (740)947-7721**