

**Chesapeake Health Department:**

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/LHD/Chesapeake/index.htm>

**Virginia Department of Health :**

[www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov)

**Official U.S. Government pandemic flu website:** [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)



**Pan Flu Vs. Seasonal Flu**

[http://pandemicflu.gov/season\\_or\\_pandemic.html](http://pandemicflu.gov/season_or_pandemic.html)

**Local American Red Cross**

**Web Address**

<http://www.my-redcross.org/>

This guidance is based on current information from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Pandemic Influenza Plan and is subject to change .

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# CARING FOR YOUR FAMILY AT HOME DURING A

# FLU PANDEMIC



Your Family • Your Community



## Preventing the Spread of Influenza

Most patients with pandemic influenza will be able to remain at home during the course of their illness and can be cared for by others who live in the household. This information is intended to help you recognize the symptoms of influenza and care for ill persons in the home, both during a typical influenza season and during an influenza pandemic. At the outset of an influenza pandemic, a vaccine for any *pandemic* flu virus **will not** be available for several months. However, it's still a good idea to get a *seasonal* flu vaccine to protect from seasonal flu viruses.

## Prevent the Spread of Illness in the Home

Because influenza can spread easily from person to person, anyone living in or visiting a home where someone has influenza can become infected. For this reason, it is important to take steps to prevent the spread of influenza to others in the home.



## What Caregivers Can Do

- Physically separate influenza patients from other people as much as possible. When practical, the ill person should stay in a separate room where others do not enter. Other people living in the home should limit contact with the ill person as much as possible.
- Designate one person in the household as the main caregiver for the ill person.

Ideally, this caregiver should be healthy and not have medical conditions that would put him or her at risk for severe influenza disease. Medical conditions that are considered "high risk" include the following:

- **Pregnancy**
- **Diabetes**
- **Age over 65**
- **Kidney disease**
- **Heart problems**
- **Disease or treatment that suppresses the immune system**
- **Chronic lung disease, including asthma, emphysema, cystic fibrosis, chronic bronchitis, bronchiectasis and tuberculosis (TB)**

# HOME CARE FOR PANDEMIC FLU

## What Caregivers Can Do (Continued)

- Monitor the persons temperature frequently.
- It may be helpful to keep a log book of their symptoms and record their temperature each time it is taken.
- Make sure they get plenty of rest and drink a lot of fluids to prevent them from becoming dehydrated.
- Watch for influenza symptoms in other household members.
- If possible, contact your health care provider if you have questions about caring for the ill person. However, it may be difficult to contact your usual healthcare provider during a severe Influenza pandemic.
- If special telephone hotlines are used for the health department and throughout the community, these numbers will also be announced through the media.
- During an influenza pandemic, only people who are essential for patient care or support should enter a home where someone is ill with pandemic influenza unless they have already had influenza.
- If other persons must enter the home, they should avoid close contact with the patient by staying more than 3 feet from the patient and using the precautions recommended on this sheet.

## What Everyone in the Household Can Do

- Wash hands with soap and water or, if soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand cleanser (like Purell® or other brand) after each contact with an influenza patient or with objects in the area where the patient is located. Cleaning your hands is the single best preventive measure for everyone in the household.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth without first washing your hands for 20 seconds. Wash hands before and after using the bathroom.
- Wash soiled dishes and eating utensils either in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap. It's not necessary to separate eating utensils used by a patient with influenza.
- Laundry can be washed in a standard washing machine with warm or cold water and detergent. It is not necessary to separate soiled linen and laundry used by a patient with influenza from other household laundry. Do not grasp the laundry close to your body or face, in order to avoid contamination. Wash hands with soap and water after handling soiled laundry.
- Place tissues used by the ill patient in a bag and throw them away immediately with other household waste. Consider placing a bag at the bedside for this purpose.
- Clean counters, surfaces and other areas in the home regularly using everyday cleaning products.

## Know the Symptoms- Influenza (Flu) vs. Cold

(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, September 2005)

Symptom	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare	Usually high; 100 °F - 102°F
Headache	Rare	Common
General Aches, pains	Slight	Usual; often severe
Fatigue, weakness	Sometimes	Usual, up to 2-3 weeks
Extreme exhaustion	Never	Usual, at the beginning
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild-moderate hacking cough	Common, can be severe
Treatment	Antihistamines, decongestants, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications.	<b>Seasonal Flu-</b> See your doctor  <b>Pandemic Flu-</b> Use this guide; follow updated information from the public health department.



## Prevent the Spread of Illness in the Community

- Stay at home if you are sick. Ill persons should not leave the home until they have recovered because they can spread the infection to others. In a typical influenza season, persons with influenza should avoid contact with others for about 5 days after onset of the illness. During an influenza pandemic, public health authorities will provide information on how long persons with influenza should remain at home.
- If the ill person must leave home (such as for medical care), he or she may wear a surgical or procedure mask, if available, and should be sure to take the following steps:
  1. Cover the mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, using tissues or your upper sleeve instead of the hands.
  2. Use tissues to contain mucous and watery discharge from the mouth and nose.
  3. Dispose of tissues in the nearest waste bin immediately after use or carry a small plastic bag (like a zip-lock bag) for used tissues.
  4. Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water (for 20 seconds) or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser after covering your mouth for a cough or sneeze, after wiping or blowing your nose, and after handling contaminated objects and materials, including tissues.

## Remember:

To avoid spreading influenza germs in your home and throughout the community,

- Wash your hands frequently
- Cover your Cough
- Stay home from work or school when you are sick