

Weekly Wellness Tip

H1N1 (Swine) Flu: Caring for Someone Who is Ill

As H1N1 (swine) flu continues to sweep across the country, it's possible you may need to care for someone infected with this flu. Knowing what to do is important not just to help that person get better, but to also keep yourself and others from acquiring the flu.

H1N1 (swine) flu can cause symptoms that include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea. Call your doctor right away if you or someone you are caring for has flu symptoms (even mild ones) and has been exposed to someone with H1N1 (swine) flu, or has traveled to areas where there are documented cases of H1N1 (swine) flu. Treatment includes pain relievers, antivirals, rest, fluids, and isolation.

If you are a caregiver, follow this advice:

- **No visitors.** Other than the caregiver, the sick person should not have visitors, no matter how well-meaning they are.
- **Limit contact** with the sick person to one adult caretaker. Keep the sick person away from other household members as much as you can. Take special care to keep pregnant women, small children, and those with chronic health conditions away from the ill person. If possible, let the sick person have a separate bedroom and bathroom.
- **Avoid being face-to-face.** Hold sick children with their chin on your shoulder so they won't cough in your face.
- **Enforce handwashing.** Everyone in your household should wash their hands often with soap and water. Wash your hands immediately after you have been exposed to the sick person or handle used tissues or laundry.
- **Don't share.** Avoid sharing towels, utensils, or linens. Use disposable paper towels to dry hands after washing, if possible. Throw the paper towel in the trash after one use. If paper towel use is not an option, each person in the house should have a separate towel for their use only. Use a separate color or label for each person.
- **Disinfect daily.** Keep surfaces and items used frequently (telephones, microwaves, etc.) clean using a household disinfectant.
- **Masks.** The person who is sick should wear a mask if he or she will be in contact with anyone else.
- **Ask your doctor about antiviral drugs.** If you are caring for or are in the same household as a person with H1N1 (swine) flu, ask your doctor if you should take antiviral medications. These medications can help keep you from getting ill.
- **Watch for flu symptoms** in yourself and other household members. Call the doctor right away if you or someone else in the house feels sick.

Source: UnitedHealthcare

H1N1 (Swine) Flu Portal

Go to teamhealth.com/wellness/fluinformation for more information about H1N1 (swine) flu and resources that are available to you.