



What you must know about pandemic flu

How pandemic flu spreads from person to person

Pandemic flu typically spreads by a virus inside droplets of spit or mucus. When an infected person coughs or sneezes they can spray the virus onto anyone within three feet. The contagious virus also spreads through contact with droplets on the hands of an infected person and on other objects and surfaces, like doorknobs.

Questions you may have about treatment

Will I get a vaccine for pandemic flu?

A vaccine is not available at this time, though scientists are hard at work to find one that works against this particular virus.

Is there a medicine I can take to help control my symptoms?

Antivirals (Tamiflu) are drugs that sometimes help against flu viruses. If the doctor who examines you determines your illness can be helped with an antiviral, s/he will prescribe it.

What can I do to control my symptoms?

Drink lots of fluids (like water) and get plenty of rest. Staying in bed gives your body a chance to recover. Take a pain reliever for fever, sore throat and head and body aches (***do not give aspirin to children and teenagers***). Most importantly, follow your doctor's instructions.

Prevent the spread of illness in the Health Care Center

- Always cover your coughs and sneezes with your sleeve or a tissue to keep droplets containing the flu virus from getting into the environment.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Use the Health Care Center's hand-cleaning stations or restrooms.

How caregivers at home can prevent the spread of disease

- Keep influenza patients away from other people as much as possible.
- One person in the household should be the main caregiver for the ill person.
- Watch for influenza symptoms in other household members.
- Wearing surgical facemasks may help decrease the spread of influenza when worn by the patient and/or caregiver **every** time they are in close contact (within three feet).

Cautiously remove facemasks to avoid becoming infected from germs on the outside of mask. A facemask should be worn only once, then thrown away with the trash.

What everyone in the household can do

- **Wash hands** with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer after each contact with an influenza patient or with objects near the patient.
- **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 patient's dishes and utensils** either in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap.
- **Wash patient's dirty linen and laundry** in a washing machine with detergent. Wash hands with soap and water after handling soiled laundry.
- **Get rid of patient's used tissues** by putting them in a bag and throwing the bag away with other household waste. Wash hands after handling.
- **Regularly clean counters** and other areas in your home using everyday cleaning products.
- **Stay home if you're sick** to reduce the spread of disease in your community.

Only people essential for patient care or support should enter a home where someone is sick with pandemic flu – unless they've already had the illness.

Signs and symptoms of pandemic flu

Someone with pandemic flu may have typical flu symptoms like fever (100.4° F; 38° C), cough, weakness/exhaustion, sore throat, and head and muscle aches. Infants younger than 2 months showing poor feeding or other flu symptoms should be seen right away by a medical provider.

A person with any of the following symptoms should seek medical care:

- Difficulty breathing, fast breathing or bluish color to the skin or lips
- Coughing up blood
- Signs of dehydration
- Confusion or inappropriate responses
- Pain or pressure in the chest
- Convulsions
- Getting worse after appearing to improve

Get more information

- You will be given medical instructions before you leave the Health Care Center. Follow these carefully.
- Ask a staff person at the Health Care Center if you don't understand something.
- When you get home, you can call the Pandemic Flu Hotline at **(xxx) xxx-xxxx** (TTY Relay: **711**) or visit our Web site at **www.kingcounty.gov/health/pandemicflu**
- Regularly check local news reports for emergency updates.