

How to Manage Influenza Symptoms

Influenza is caused by a virus. It takes time to recover from influenza. Help the ill person get enough to drink and feel as comfortable as possible. **Call 911 or your health care provider if the symptoms get worse.**

Fever

- One way the body fights infection
- High fever (above 101°F by mouth) can cause dehydration.
- Call healthcare provider if fever is above 104° F and does not go down.

Managing fever

Give medicine for fever greater than 101°F (38.3°C).

- Acetaminophen* (Tylenol®): Do not give to anyone with liver disease unless their healthcare provider prescribes it.
- Ibuprofen* (Motrin®)
- **Do not give aspirin to anyone less than 18 years old.**
- Ask your healthcare provider for products and dosage for children less than 2 years.
- If fever is higher than 104°F
 - Help the ill person drink cool liquids – especially water.
 - Place a cool cloth on the forehead.
 - Give a sponge bath with lukewarm water (just over body temperature - not cold water).
 - Re-check the person's temperature after 20 minutes.
 - Stop the sponge bath if the person gets chilled or starts shaking.

Dehydration

Prevent dehydration:

Adults need 2 - 3 quarts of fluids per day (1 quart per day for young children) to prevent dehydration.

- Give liquids such as broth, juice (half-strength for children), tea, sports drinks, or oral rehydration formula (see below).
- Large amounts of caffeine can increase urine output and increase dehydration.
 - Limit caffeinated drinks to 1-3 cups per day.
- Give cool drinks - not hot - if the ill person has a fever.
- Food intake is not critical while the person is most ill, but fluid intake is.

Oral rehydration formula:

- Mix together
 - 4 cups water
 - 3 Tablespoons sugar or honey (do not give honey to infants under 1 year of age)
 - ¼ teaspoon salt
- Add lemon, lime or mint for flavor if desired

Dehydration symptoms include:

- thirst (often an early sign of dehydration)
- flushed face
- dry mouth
- rapid and deep breathing
- fast and/or weak pulse
- sunken, tearless eyes
- little or no urine output
- dark colored urine
- dizziness made worse by standing
- weakness
- sleepiness or irritability
- headache
- in infants, sunken “soft spot” on head
- **decreased alertness or change in consciousness (Call 911)**



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Cyanosis

- Skin turns gray/blue because the person is not getting enough oxygen.

Managing cyanosis:

- **Call “911” right away.**

Shortness of breath

- Having a hard time getting a breath.
- Feeling of not getting enough air.

Managing shortness of breath:

- Help the person stay calm and take deep, slow breaths.

Sore throat

- Scratchy or swollen throat makes swallowing hard.

Managing sore throat:

- Use throat lozenges* (adults only).
- Gargle with warm water.

Body aches

Managing body aches:

- Take a warm shower or bath (if able).
- Take acetaminophen* (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen* (Motrin®).
- **People less than 18 years old should not take aspirin or aspirin-containing products.**

Cough

- Can help clear breathing passageways.
- Phlegm or mucous may make breathing harder.

Managing cough:

- Use over-the-counter cough medicine. Follow package directions for dosage and intervals between doses.
- Use cough lozenges (adults only).

Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea

- Can lead to dehydration (not enough fluids) - fever can also cause dehydration.

Managing nausea, vomiting, diarrhea:

- Give fluids
 - Broth, juice (half-strength for children), tea, sports drinks, or oral rehydration formula
 - 1 teaspoon every 5 minutes; if no vomiting after 30 minutes, double the amount every 30 minutes until they can drink on their own.

Call care provider or 911 if sick person:

- Has difficulty breathing or chest pain
- Has gray/blue lips or skin.
- Has fever above 104° F (above 101° F for child) that cannot be reduced.
- Has severe or persistent vomiting.
- Has a sign of dehydration (See fact dehydration sheet).
- Has seizures or uncontrolled movements
- Is unable to move an arm or leg.
- Is confused or not waking up.
- Improves and then symptoms return.