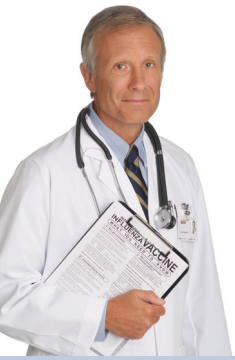
What you can do to stop the flu



A guide to home care and prevention

Inside you will find tips on how to prevent the flu and how to care for someone who is sick with the flu.

San Mateo County Health Department
225 37th Ave, San Mateo, CA 94403
Website: www.smhealth.org/flu
Flu Hotline: (650) 573-3927



"The best way to protect yourself and others against the flu is to get a flu shot every year. October and November are the best months to get vaccinated, but you can still get vaccinated in December and later. Flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as springtime."

Be Aware of Common Flu Symptoms

The flu is a contagious illness caused by the influenza virus. Most healthy people with the flu will get better in 3 to 7 days, although they may continue to cough and feel tired for 2 weeks or longer. The flu can cause serious problems for some people, including adults fifty and older, anyone with chronic health conditions (asthma, diabetes, HIV, heart, lung, kidney, or liver disease), pregnant women and children. If you are caring for someone in any of these "high risk" groups, ask his or her doctor what health changes you should watch for. If you live by yourself and don't have someone to watch over you, you should also see your doctor.

Symptoms of the flu

- ✔ High fever and chills
- ✔ Aching muscles
- ✔ Extreme tiredness
- ✔ Headache
- ✔ Dry cough
- ✔ Sore throat
- ✔ Lasts 2 weeks or longer

Caring for a Family Member with the Flu



A person with flu should:

- Get plenty of rest
- Stay home from work or school, and away from most people
- Drink plenty of fluids, like soup, juices, water
- Avoid alcohol, coffee, tea and tobacco
- Take medications to relieve flu symptoms

If you are caring for a person with the flu—

- Keep a written record of the date and time of their symptoms and the medications given.
- Make sure your family member drinks plenty of fluids, like soup, juices, and water.
- Reduce fever by giving medications such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen and sponge baths with lukewarm or cool water.
- Call the doctor if your family member's symptoms continue to worsen.
- Do not give your family member left over prescription medications or other people's medications that you may have. Remember that antibiotics do not cure the flu.

Stop the Spread of Flu in Your Home



The flu usually spreads from person to person when people who are infected cough or sneeze. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Here are some tips to help you stop the spread of flu viruses in your home:

Isolate the sick person within your home.

- The person who is sick should not leave the house unless he or she is being taken to a medical appointment. Do not have visitors while the person is sick.
- The sick family member should be alone in a separate room with a door that can be closed, if possible. One person should be chosen to care for the sick family member.
- The sick person should wear a mask when anyone is in the same room or car. People in the room or car with the sick person should also wear a mask. Disposable gloves should be used when cleaning any room or area where the sick person has been.

Wash hands with soap or use alcohol-based hand rubs.

- Everyone in the household should wash their hands with soap between contacts with others, before preparing food, and before eating.
- Wash hands after touching used tissues, dirty laundry, or common areas.

Keep your house clean.

- Clean surfaces and commonly shared items like microwave ovens, refrigerator handles, phones, remote controls, doorknobs and handles, toilet seats and handles, faucets, light switches and toys every day.
- Use a household disinfectant or chlorine bleach mixture: store-brand chlorine bleach can be used by mixing 1/4 cup chlorine bleach with one gallon of cool water.

Cover your coughs and sneezes.

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your upper arm, sleeve, or a tissue. Do NOT cough or sneeze directly into your hands.
- Teach your family members to cover their cough. Put used tissues in the trash immediately.
- Try to stay at least three feet away from others who are coughing.

GET READY!

Make sure you have these supplies in your flu home care kit.

- ✔ Thermometer
- ✔ Soap
- ✔ Acetaminophen—such as, Tylenol®, Aspirin Free Anacin® Maximum Strength or Cetafen®
- ✔ Ibuprofen—such as, Advil®, Motrin® or Ultraprin
- ✔ Bleach
- ✔ Alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- ✔ Paper towels
- ✔ Tissues
- ✔ Surgical or cloth masks—for example, a bandana
- ✔ Box of disposable gloves