

Influenza-Like Illness: You're sick. Here's what to do!

A Guide to Self-Care

YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS CONSISTENT WITH INFLUENZA

In general, if you are NOT experiencing severe symptoms (high fever, difficulty breathing, chest pain, persistent vomiting, severe diarrhea or dehydration), your symptoms are best managed with home care unless you are pregnant or have a chronic medical condition. *H1N1 and seasonal flu may be more severe in patients who are pregnant or those with chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes or asthma; if you have such conditions and are symptomatic, please call the UCSC Student Health Center at 459-2500 for a same day appointment or contact your medical provider. If you are not sure if you need to be seen or have questions about self care, please call the UCSC Student Health Center Advice Line 831-459-2591 Monday through Friday between 9:30 and 4:30. For questions after hours, please call 1-800-977-0027*

ANTIVIRALS (SUCH AS TAMIFLU) AND ANTIBIOTICS

Antibiotics are not effective against viruses such as influenza. Taking antibiotics are not only unhelpful but they may cause adverse effects and contribute to developing resistant bacteria. There are some antiviral medicines that are given only to those with severe medical conditions. These medicines merely shorten the illness by a day or two, and are most effective if given early in the course of illness. Antivirals are not recommended for the general population.

HERE'S HOW TO HELP YOURSELF FEEL BETTER UNTIL IT GOES AWAY

- **Get plenty of rest. Don't smoke or drink alcohol**
- **Weakness**—you become dehydrated more easily when you have a high fever. Drink lots of different non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated liquids, such as chicken soup, juice, water, diluted Gatorade, Pedialyte.
- **Fever, muscle aches and headache**—Take up to four 200 mg pills ibuprofen (same as Motrin or Advil) with food every 8 hours. (Maximum daily dose=2400mg) If fever is still high, you can add Tylenol—1000 mg every 4-6 hours, up to a maximum of 4000 mg in 24 hours. This will help a lot! It may be helpful to alternate ibuprofen and Tylenol. Please follow directions.
- **Cough**—Cough medicine you buy over the counter (OTC) with dextromethorphan may help. If the cough is really bothersome, prescription cough medicine may help.
- **Runny nose**—OTC Afrin (oxymetazoline) nasal spray may help. Sudafed (pseudoephedrine) 60 mg every 6-8 hours may help. OTC Benadryl (diphenhydramine) 25 mg 1-2 twice daily may also help. Please follow directions.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The flu will last 5-7 days. After you have recovered, you may continue to feel more weak and tired than usual. In some people the cough may persist for several weeks.

You are contagious from one day before symptoms begin until 24 hours after your fever is gone. Stay home, do not attend work or classes and keep away from other people until you have been fever-free for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications. If you live in the residence halls, please stay out of the dining commons. Ask a friend to pick up a "to go" box from dining.

BE ON ALERT

If you experience any of the following warning signs, seek medical care:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Significant dizziness or confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Fever over 104 degrees (40 C) *not responding to medication*
- Fever lasting longer than three days may occasionally indicate a secondary bacterial infection

PREVENT THE SPREAD

There are everyday actions you can do to help prevent the spread of germs that cause illnesses like influenza:

- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw tissue in the trash after you use it. Wash your hands afterward.
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. **Alcohol-based hand cleaners** are also effective. The virus spreads from coughing the virus out into the air and from touching surfaces with your hands.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose, or mouth to reduce the spread of germs.
- **Do not share** drinks, cigarettes or unwashed utensils with others.
- **Avoid** large crowds and people who are clearly ill.
- **Get immunized** against the seasonal flu now and the H1N1 flu when it becomes available.

CONCERNED ABOUT CLASSES?

Faculty have been instructed NOT to require a "doctor's note" for absences. It is your responsibility to email your professors or call them to inform them of your absence and meet your academic requirements.

For more information, visit: healthcenter.ucsc.edu