

When to Seek Medical Help

Most people get over the flu at *home* by getting plenty of bed rest, drinking lots of fluids, and taking pain relievers to reduce fever and ease body aches. However, there are good reasons to seek medical treatment, such as when symptoms are very severe and quickly worsen. In addition, a certain number of people, including children and ordinarily healthy young adults, can become extremely ill with pandemic influenza and require hospitalization. Here are some guidelines to help you determine when to seek medical help.



Q: Who Should Stay Home?

Anyone who is sick should stay home. Sick children and teens should be kept home and not allowed to go to school, to the mall or other public places, or to visit friends. People who are only *mildly ill* and don't have other medical problems should **stay home** and rest.

Q: When Should I Call the Doctor?

- If you feel like you are getting sicker and sicker, or are experiencing severe symptoms such as a high fever that persists for more than a day, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, inability to eat or drink, or altered state of consciousness, **seek medical advice.**
- If you are going to a doctor's office, **call in advance** and tell them that you might have influenza. They may ask you to come through a separate entrance, wait in a special area, and/or put on a surgical mask when you arrive.
- If you must call an ambulance, **tell the emergency operator you may have influenza** so the emergency medical technicians can take steps to protect themselves from becoming infected with flu virus.
- If you don't know whether you should seek medical help, call your doctor or the public health department and **get telephone advice** about what to do.