

NCR Common Health Message for the Flu

This information has been approved by the Health Officials Committee for use as talking points and for adaptation for use in a variety of public education tools.

Stop the spread of flu by:

- Washing your hands often
- Covering your face with a tissue or your elbow when you cough or sneeze
- Staying home when sick
- Getting vaccinated

If You or a Loved One Gets Sick

- Get plenty of rest
- Drink fluids to prevent dehydration
- Consider taking fever-reducing medication
- Antiviral medication may be prescribed for those at risk for serious problems from the flu. Take them within two (2) days after symptoms start
- Do not go to the Emergency Room unless a real emergency
- Get medical attention fast for trouble breathing, seizures, confusion

Self-Care at Home

Fever, headaches, muscle pain

- Use acetaminophen (Tylenol™)* or ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil™)*.
- Do not give aspirin to children less than 18 years of age unless told by your child's doctor, because it can cause serious problems.
- For fever in a child less than 2 years of age, call your child's doctor.

Vomiting and diarrhea

- Drink plenty of water, juices, and fluids like sports drinks and pediatric rehydration fluids (e.g., Pedialyte) to prevent dehydration.
- Avoid coffee, tea, and colas with caffeine because they cause you to lose more fluids.

Cough

- Use a cough suppressant* if coughing bothers your eating or sleeping.
- Use a mask (surgical or procedure) if your doctor or local health department tells you.

Congestion

- Use a decongestant.* Nasal sprays may give relief, but do not use them for more than two (2) to three (3) days.

Sore throat

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Suck on throat lozenges.
- Gargle with warm salt water and spit it out.
- Use a humidifier to moisten the air.
- Speak only as needed to protect your voice.

Antivirals*

- Your doctor may prescribe antiviral medication* if you are at high risk for serious problems from the flu.
- Antiviral medications* must be started within two (2) days after symptoms start to work well.

General care

- Get lots of rest.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Avoid alcohol and tobacco.

*Follow the directions on the package or talk to your doctor or pharmacist about which products, their side-effects and dose. Use all medications as directed.

Seek Medical Care for Adults**

Call or see a doctor if an adult has:	Go to the emergency room if an adult has/is:
Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher for 2 days (48 hours).	Breathing which is difficult or painful.
Fever with sore throat, headache, severe earache, stomachache, and/or muscle aches that do not improve.	Feeling short of breath while resting.
Hoarse, barking cough.	Coughing up bloody sputum or phlegm.
A history of heart or lung disease or any chronic disease that requires regular medical care.	Feeling chest pain.
A history of disease or treatment that weakens the immune system.	Having continuous vomiting and/or diarrhea.
	Sleepy and difficult to wake up or is not responding.
	Confused or disoriented.

Seek Medical Care for Children and Teenagers**

Call or see a doctor if your child has:	Go to the emergency room if your child has/is:
Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.	Three (3) months of age or younger with fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.
Hoarse cry, or a barking cough or is pulling on his/her ears.	Breathing which is difficult (that is, wheezing, noisy, too fast/too slow, their muscles pull between the ribs).
Decreased eating and drinking.	Not eating or drinking.
A history of heart or lung disease or any chronic disease that requires regular medical care.	Symptoms such as pale or blue lips, hands, feet, or cold legs.
A history of disease or treatment that weakens the immune system.	Having continuous vomiting and/or diarrhea.
Prolonged crying and cannot be calmed.	Not urinating – for babies, no wet diaper in 8 hours.
Decreased activity, no interest in playing.	Sleeping more than normal, is difficult to wake up, is confused, or is not responding.
Fever with sore throat, headache, stomachache, earache, and/or muscle aches.	Having seizures.
A medical condition that requires taking aspirin regularly.	Signs of pain including headache, stiff neck, and is sensitive to light.

**Call or see a doctor any time you feel uncomfortable how your child or the adult is looking or acting.