



San Mateo County Health Department

Guide to Flu Prevention and Care

for group homes and other residential settings

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Prevent the spread of colds and flu

Wash hands correctly!

Follow these steps:

- Wet hands with warm, running water and apply soap.
- Rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds, covering all parts of the hands, fingers, and wrists.
- Scrub fingernails by rubbing them against the palms of your hands.
- Rinse your hands with water.
- Dry your hands thoroughly with a paper towel or your own personal towel and use it to turn off the faucet. A shared towel can spread germs.



Cover your coughs and sneezes!

- When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and place used tissues in a wastebasket. Wash your hands afterwards.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve.



Get a flu shot!

- Get your flu shot in the fall from your doctor or at the vaccine clinics offered by the San Mateo County Health Department.

Protect others!

- In general, people with flu-like symptoms (such as fever, runny nose, cough, muscle aches, or sore throat) should stay home from work or school.
- Those with symptoms should wear a surgical mask to prevent spreading infection.

Flu symptoms

Learn the difference between a cold and the flu

Flu or flu-like illness	The common cold
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High fever and chills ■ Aching muscles ■ Extreme tiredness ■ Headache ■ Dry cough ■ Sore throat ■ Lasts 2 weeks or longer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mild fever ■ Scratchy, sore throat ■ Sneezing ■ Runny nose ■ Congestion ■ Lasts 3-7 days

IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE THE FLU, CALL YOUR DOCTOR!

- Many symptoms can be treated by a doctor over the telephone.
- A doctor may perform a test for the diagnosis and may prescribe medicines to treat the flu.
- Antibiotics do NOT cure the flu.
- Do NOT give a resident left-over prescription medication or another person's medicine. **ONLY GIVE A RESIDENT MEDICATIONS PRESCRIBED BY HIS OR HER DOCTOR.**
- If you believe a resident has the flu and he or she has a chronic illness such as diabetes, HIV, high blood pressure, heart or lung problems, kidney failure or liver failure, or is pregnant, take him or her to see a doctor as soon as possible if his or her health worsens.
- Anyone who lives alone and does not have anyone to watch over him or her should also see a doctor.

Caring for a resident with the flu

A person with flu should:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink plenty of fluids, like soup, juices, and water.
- Avoid tea, coffee, alcohol and tobacco.
- Take medications to relieve flu symptoms.
 - Anybody with high blood pressure or anyone who takes medications to control high blood pressure should talk to his or her doctor before taking over the counter

BE PREPARED

Be sure you have the following supplies on hand:

- ✓ 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
- ✓ Sugar, baking soda, salt, and salt substitute
- ✓ Enough prescription medication, food, and water for two weeks

decongestant medications such as pseudoephedrine (Sudafed®, Genafed®, or Contact® Cold) or phenylephrine (Sudafed PE,™ Neo-Synephrine®, AH-chew®) as these can cause an increase in blood pressure.

Keep track of symptoms

- Keep a written record of symptoms and the care given.
- Write date, time, temperature, symptoms, medication given, and dosage.
- This should be checked and written at least every 4 hours or when symptoms change.

Anti-dehydration Drink

- ✓ 4 glasses of water
- ✓ ½ tsp baking soda
- ✓ ½ tsp salt
- ✓ 3-4 tbsp sugar
- ✓ ¼ tsp salt substitute (can buy this at grocery stores)
- ✓ Flavor with lemon juice or sugar free drink mix

Prevent dehydration

- Dehydration occurs when the body loses too much water, and it is not replaced quickly enough.
- Make sure the sick person drinks as much fluid as possible; clear fruit juices, sports drinks, soup, and broth are good options.
- Do not give dehydrating drinks such as coffee, tea, or alcohol.
- If you do not have juices or sports drinks readily available, you can make your own drink to prevent dehydration.

Reduce fever

- Give plenty of fluids.

- Give fever-reducing medication, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®, Aspirin Free Anacin® Maximum Strength, or Cetafen®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin® or Ultraprin)
- Take all medications as directed on the package.
 - Do not take more than recommended by your physician.
 - Avoid giving aspirin to anyone younger than 20 years of age.
- Give a sponge bath with lukewarm or cool water to relieve discomfort.

Call the doctor if a resident has the following:

- High fever
 - Babies up to 3 months old: rectal temperature greater than 100.4 F° or 38 C.°
 - Babies 3-24 months old, children, and adults: temperature greater than 103 F° or 39.4 C.°
- Shaking chills.
- Coughing that produces thick mucus.
- Feeling of dry mouth or excessive thirst.
- Worsening of an existing medical condition (heart or lung disease, diabetes, HIV, cancer) while ill with the flu.

If you cannot reach your doctor for any of the signs below, call 911

- Unusual irritability or confusion in adults
- Unable to help your child stop crying
- Difficulty breathing or chest pain
- Bluish skin
- Stiff neck
- Inability to move arm or leg
- Convulsions

Prevent spread of infection within your residence

■ **Isolate**

- The sick person should be alone in a separate room, if possible.
- One person should be chosen to take care of the sick person.

■ **Mask**

- The ill person should wear a mask to avoid infecting other residents.

■ **Change linens frequently**

- Change linens, bedding, and clothes daily, and wash in detergent and hot water.
- Wash your hands after handling dirty laundry.

■ **Disinfect surfaces**

- Clean surfaces that are commonly touched, such as doorknobs, light switches, faucets, handles, and other

surfaces with a disinfectant, such as dilute bleach solution.

Disinfectant

✓ ¼ cup bleach

✓ 1 gallon water

Make a fresh batch every time you use it.

■ **Handwashing**

- The person giving care must wash hands frequently and avoid touching his or her own face

■ **Separate**

- All personal items should be separate. Avoid sharing computers, pens, papers, clothes, towels, sheets, blankets, food, or eating utensils.

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