

HOW TO CARE FOR SOMEONE WITH SWINE FLU

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF THE SWINE FLU?

- Sudden onset of illness
- Fever higher than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- Chills
- Cough
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Stuffy nose
- Muscle aches
- Feeling of weakness
- Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain and/or exhaustion occur more commonly in children

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

KY Cabinet for Health and Family Services
Frankfort, KY

FOR MEDIA: 1-502-564-6786

<http://chfs.ky.gov>

<http://healthalerts.ky.gov>

KY Regional Poison Center Louisville, KY

EMERGENCY: 1-800-222-1222

<http://www.krpc.com/>

The Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention (CDC) Atlanta, GA

Toll free: 1-800-232-4636

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu>

HOW DO YOU CARE FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS SWINE FLU?

If you suspect that someone you live with has swine flu, the first thing to do is monitor their condition.

- Check the person's temperature using a digital thermometer.
- Check the person's skin for color (pink, pale or bluish) and rash.
- Monitor the amount of liquids a person consumes.
- Keep track of medications, dosages and times given.

Separate the person with swine flu from other people who live in the home.

- One person in the household should be the main caregiver for the sick person.
- People other than the caregiver who live in the home should limit contact with the sick person.
- The sick person should use a separate bathroom from other people in the house, if possible.

WHAT SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO THE SICK PERSON?

Several items should be made available to the sick person to make them as comfortable as possible.

- Use ibuprofen or acetaminophen for fever, sore throat and general discomfort. (Do not use aspirin in children or teenagers because it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.)
- If the person is not vomiting, offer small amounts of liquids frequently to prevent dehydration, even if the person does not feel thirsty.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag for disposal within reach of the sick person.
- Do not allow the person to drink alcohol or use tobacco. Do not allow smoking in the house.

WHEN SHOULD I SEEK PROFESSIONAL TREATMENT?

If the person you are caring for experiences any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT THE SPREAD OF SWINE FLU IN THE HOME?

- Make sure all family members wash their hands often with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- All dishes and eating utensils should be washed in the dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap. Separation of eating utensils for use by a patient is not necessary.
- Laundry can be washed in a standard washing machine or by hand with warm water and soap. It is not necessary to separate soiled linen from the patient from other household laundry.
- Tissues used by the sick person should be placed in a trash bag and thrown away.
- If you must have close contact with the sick person (for example, hold a sick infant), spend the least amount of time possible in close contact and try to wear a facemask (for example, surgical mask) or N95 disposable respirator. More information on facemasks and respirators can be found at www.cdc.gov/swineflu.