



# Patterson and Tedford Pediatrics

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November, 2009

## How to treat your child or family member with flu

The H1N1 virus is in our SLO county in large numbers. Vaccine against H1N1 remains in short supply. We are confirming multiple cases of influenza in the office on a daily basis. To date the vast majority of cases we have seen have been relatively mild and uncomplicated. While we are using medications like Tamiflu® in special circumstances, the treatment of uncomplicated influenza in otherwise healthy people does not require antiviral medications.

Influenza infections are spread from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are propelled through the air and deposited in the mouth or nose of people nearby. Influenza viruses are also spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or an object (like a doorknob or counter top) and then touches their own mouth or nose (or someone else's mouth or nose) before washing their hands.

Individuals with suspected or confirmed 2009 H1N1 flu who are cared for at home should:

1. check with their health care provider about any special care they might need if they are pregnant or have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema
2. check with their health care provider about whether they should take antiviral medications
3. keep away from others as much as possible. This is to keep from making others sick. Do not go to work or school while ill
4. stay home for at least 24 hours after fever is gone. Children may require more prolonged isolation as they shed viruses for more than a week. (Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
5. use acetaminophen or ibuprofen to control fever and

aches. Do NOT use aspirin or aspirin containing products for fever or pain management in children with flu symptoms.

6. get plenty of rest
7. drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated
8. cover coughs and sneezes. Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
9. wear a face mask – if available and tolerable – when sharing common spaces with other household members to help prevent spreading the virus to others. This is especially important if other household members are at high risk for complications from influenza.

## Emergency warning signs for children

1. Fast (more than 50 breaths per minute) or labored breathing
2. Bluish or grey skin color (cyanosis)
3. Inadequate hydration (dry mouth or inadequate urine output)
4. Severe or persistent vomiting
5. Confusion or inadequate responsiveness, increasing irritability (can't be comforted)
6. Flu like symptoms improve but then return with fever, increased cough or rapid breathing.

Still need more information?

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