



B O S T O N

Influenza Care at Home

Your Health – Your Family’s Health

You have been diagnosed with influenza (“flu”). Most people with flu do not need hospital care, but there are a few steps you can take while you are recovering that will protect others in your home and community from becoming ill. To avoid passing the flu to others, you should not attend any public activities until (date will be filled in by healthcare provider or BPHC)

Instructions to follow when sick at home with influenza:

1. *Stay at home*

- Please don’t leave your home until the date listed above unless you need medical care. If your symptoms get worse, contact your health care provider for advice. If you must travel, try not to use public transportation. If you call 911, tell them you have influenza, so they too can take precautions.

Call your primary care provider if you experience:

1. High or prolonged fever
2. Fast breathing / trouble breathing / shortness of breath
3. Not drinking fluids or unable to hold down fluids
4. Severe or persistent vomiting
5. Changes in mental status, confusion or irritability (especially in young children)
6. Seizures
7. Chest pain or pressure
8. Symptoms do not improve or become worse
9. Symptoms improve and then return with fever and worsening of cough
10. Any unusual symptoms or concerns

2. *Separate yourself*

- Try to separate yourself as much as possible from household members or close contacts. Sleep in a separate bed or a separate room if possible.
- Do not have visitors.

3. *Wash your hands*

- Everyone in the household should wash their hands frequently and especially after contact with you or objects you have used (e.g. sheets, towels). Use soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser.
- You should also wash your hands often to avoid leaving germs on surfaces you touch.

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4. *Use a tissue or face mask*

- Use a clean tissue to cover your nose and mouth when you cough.
- If you are going to be within three feet of others, either cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or use a paper (surgical or procedure) mask. When wearing a mask, you should cover both the mouth and nose. You may continue to use the same mask as long as it is not wet or ripped. If you cannot wear a mask, persons in close contact with you should wear a mask. Label each mask to identify the user. Do not share a mask with others. Always wash your hands after removing the mask or using a tissue.
- Use a lined wastebasket to dispose of used masks and tissues.

5. *Do not share*

- Do not share dishes, forks, spoons, glasses or other utensils used in eating. Wash dirty dishes in a dishwasher or with warm water and dishwashing soap.
- Do not share towels or bedding. Use a standard washing machine with warm water and detergent. Do not shake or throw the dirty clothes around. Wash your hands after handling laundry.

6. *Clean*

- Clean surfaces often with a product such as Lysol or bleach solution (bleach solution: 1 ½ cups bleach per one gallon of water). Clean the bathroom daily. Wear household utility gloves while cleaning and wash your hands when finished.
- All garbage used in caring for the sick person should be bagged and placed in a container with normal household waste. Wash hands after disposing of the waste.

Caring for yourself when you have influenza

1. Follow your health care provider's instructions
2. Drink plenty of liquids
3. Get plenty of rest
4. Wash hands often with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand cleanser
5. You may take over-the-counter medications to reduce fever or relieve pain
6. Children and teenagers should not take aspirin-containing products

Monitoring

1. A health department staff member may visit or contact you by phone in order to answer questions and check to make sure you are doing okay.
2. Your close contacts should watch for fever and/or respiratory symptoms until _____.
 - If they get sick, contacts should call their primary care provider for advice.
 - If they live in Boston, ill contacts should also call the Boston Public Health Commission at (617) 534-5611.
 - Contacts who have flu symptoms should also follow the instructions above.

**For more information, please contact:
Boston Public Health Commission, Communicable Disease Control Division
(617) 534-5611 during normal business hours**