

Flu Care Basics

How to Care for Someone with Influenza

REST, HYDRATE, WATCH

- **Rest** is very important. Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible.
- Keep the person **hydrated**.
 - ◊ Offer small amounts of fluid frequently, even if the ill person does not feel thirsty
 - ◊ Watch for signs of dehydration. Someone who is dehydrated may have weakness or unresponsiveness, or decreased output of urine
 - ◊ See the “Fluids and Nutrition section” below for information about what to do if the patient is vomiting.
- **Watch** for complications. Call a doctor right away if the ill person:
 - ◊ Has difficulty breathing or fast breathing
 - ◊ Has a bluish color to the skin or lips
 - ◊ Begins coughing up blood
 - ◊ Complains of pain or pressure in the chest
 - ◊ Shows signs of dehydration and cannot take enough fluids
 - ◊ Appears confused or does not respond appropriately
 - ◊ Has convulsions
 - ◊ Gets worse after appearing to improve
 - ◊ Is an infant younger than 2 months old with fever, poor feeding, urinating less than 3 times per day, or other signs of illness

MEDICATIONS

- Use ibuprofen or acetaminophen or other measures for fever, sore throat and general discomfort
- Do not use aspirin in children or teenagers with influenza because it can cause Reye’s syndrome, a life-threatening illness

FLUIDS AND NUTRITION

- If the ill person is not eating solid foods, include fluids that contain sugars and salts, such as broth, sports drinks (diluted half and half with water) and sodas, but not diet drinks
- If the patient is vomiting, do not give any fluids or food for at least 1 hour. Then offer a clear fluid in very small amounts. Let the stomach rest for an hour after each time the person vomits before giving more fluid.
- Babies who are breast-fed and vomiting can continue to nurse, but offer smaller amounts.

