

Carers should:

- When not helping the patient directly, but talking or listening, keep an arm's length from patient.
- Wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand rub each time after touching the patient or clothes or bedding.
- Wear a mask if available.
- Use a plastic apron—when available. After use, wipe down with alcohol, carefully remove the apron and hang it up with the outer surface facing the wall or door.

When should you contact a doctor or your regular health care provider?

- Contact your regular health care provider or doctor for information or instructions if you are not improving with rest, fluids and medicines for fever and body aches, or if you have any concerns. You could also contact the cape gateway call centre for information—0860 142 142 (weekdays 08:00–18:00).
- Individuals with no flu symptoms can continue with their regular daily activities.

What is home isolation?

- You or your child may require home isolation if you have a contagious illness such as flu. You should stay at home or in isolation for 7 days
- Isolation means staying at home and not going to work, school or other public places.
- You stay at home and away from people to prevent from spreading flu to others. It gives you time to recover.
- Keep a 2 meter distance when contact with other household members is unavoidable. Everyone should wash their hands often.

More Information / Enquiries :

Visit the following website

http://www.capegateway.gov.za/eng/your_gov/305

What about medicines and vaccines?

- There are specific medicines, but these are only used / recommended for certain people who may be at risk of more severe disease. e.g. those with chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes etc.
- International experts are working to develop a vaccine for “swine flu” / pandemic flu.

Schools and workplaces

- Hand washing and “cover your cough” messages should be vigorously promoted. School children and employees should take the messages home to families and friends.
- Closing of places of work or schools is controversial. An decision to close a school/s will need to be a joint decision by the Department of Education and Health.
- Employers and employees should discuss sick leave procedures upfront.

Basic prevention measures

1. Catch your cough / sneeze

- into a tissue and dispose of tissue in dustbin immediately (best way!)
- into the inside of your elbow
- If you use your hands to catch your cough or sneeze— be sure to wash them
- Into the blanket or cover you are lying under

2. Wash your hands after coughing /sneezing

- thoroughly with soap & water after coughing or sneezing, if up and about.

If in bed: if available use tissues, which can be collected in a container and put straight into the rubbish bin.

- If alcohol hand rub is available, place it by the bed and rub on after coughing or after making contact with the patient.

- **3. Stay at home** if you have flu-like illness until you feel better and have stopped coughing. Stay home and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Novel Influenza A (H1N1) “Swine Flu”

- What is it?
- How can I catch it?
- What are the symptoms of flu?
- How serious is flu?
- What can help prevent catching the flu?
- What if I or my child gets sick or has symptoms?
- When should you contact a doctor or your regular health care provider?
- What is home isolation?
- What about medicines and vaccines?
- Schools and workplaces



What is it?

Influenza or Flu (seasonal or pandemic) is a respiratory illness. It is spread from person to person by contact with infected respiratory secretions infected with the flu virus.

How can I catch it?

Flu viruses are spread from person to person mainly through coughing or sneezing of persons with influenza.

Sometimes people may be infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their eyes, mouth or nose. So its important to wash your hands, frequently.

What are the symptoms of flu?

The symptoms of “swine flu” in people are the same as the symptoms of seasonal or normal flu.

- Flu usually starts typically with a sudden onset of high fever (>38°C), cough, sore throat, tiredness, runny nose, aches and pains all over the body and sometimes also diarrhoea or vomiting.
- The illness and infectiousness usually lasts about 5 to 7 days and a few days longer in children. A person can spread the virus, a day or so before symptoms start and for about 7 days after the symptoms start.

What can help prevent catching the flu?

Flu whether seasonal or pandemic is very infectious and difficult to avoid. You can only reduce the risk by taking standard precautionary measures:

- Wash your hands or clean them with alcohol-based hand rubs frequently, especially

after you cough / sneeze and before and after touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

- Catching your cough or sneeze, or cough / sneeze into your sleeve; and encourage others to do the same.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, as infections can spread that way.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Encouraging those who are ill with flu symptoms to stay home until better.
- Stay in good health by getting plenty of sleep, eating nutritious food and drinking plenty of non-sugar and low sugar fluids.

How serious is flu?

Like seasonal flu, it can be mild to severe. Symptoms or complications such as pneumonia may develop in moderate to severe cases.

Serious symptoms in children that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing and / difficulty breathing
- Bluish or grey skin colour
- Fever that is not reduced with “over the counter” medicines
- Inability to drink enough fluids (thirsty, weak, dry mouth, sunken eyes, passing small amounts of dark urine)
- Flu-like symptoms improve, but then return with fever and worse cough.

Serious symptoms in adults needing urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen

- Confusion and dizziness
- Dehydration, as a result of persistent vomiting or diarrhoea or weakness and inability to drink enough fluids.
- Flu-like symptoms improve, but then return with fever and worse cough.

To diagnosis “swine flu” infection a respiratory specimen needs to be collected within the first 4-5 days. **People with mild illness do not need to have a test done and should not go to the doctor for this.**

What if I or my child gets sick or has symptoms?

Home care for the sick

If you or your child is sick, you can do these things to feel better:

- Children and adults who are sick should stay at home. Do not send children to school or daycare.
- Drink lots of fluids
- Get plenty of rest
- For fever, sore throat, muscle aches, you can use fever reducing medicines that your health care provider or doctor recommends based on your child’s age. Do not give aspirin to children or teenagers.
- Keep your child comfortable
- Wash hands frequently
- A person who is sick should recover in his or her own room as much as possible.
- If possible—do not share a bed with children
- If someone in your home is sick, keep the person away from those who are not sick.