

Caring for People with Influenza at Home

Instructions for the sick person:

- Stay home until you do not have a fever and are feeling better. Health care workers who are ill should be off work for a minimum of 7 days; after which, they can return to work when their fever is gone and they are feeling better.
- Avoid contact with the rest of the family as much as possible. Ensure you have your own towel in the bathroom.
- Cough into a tissue or your sleeve. Discard used tissues right away and wash your hands.
- Wash hands frequently using warm water and pump soap or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Don't share anything that goes in your mouth such as unwashed utensils or drinking glasses and toothbrushes.
- Try to avoid having visitors in the house.
- If you need to leave the house for a medical appointment, try to minimize direct contact with others as much as possible. See below for when to seek medical care.
- Follow the advice of your health care provider. You can also call Telehealth Ontario for advice (1-866-797-0000).
- Avoid the use of aspirin and aspirin-containing products for children and teenagers.

Instructions for caregivers:

- If possible, choose only one family member to care for a sick person. Pregnant women and people with medical problems may want to avoid providing direct care if possible.
- Try to maintain a distance of at least 6 feet between you and the sick person whenever possible.
- When holding a small child who is sick, place their chin on your shoulder so that they do not cough in your face.
- Wash your hands frequently with warm water and pump soap or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after each time you care for the sick person.
- Perform extra cleaning in frequently touched areas of the house (table tops, keyboards, door knobs, counter tops, remote controls, telephones, light switches, etc). Dishwashing and laundry can be done as usual.

Instructions for all household contacts:

- Watch for symptoms that include: fever, cough, sore throat, sore muscles, joint pain, weakness, fatigue, headache and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting.
- Stay home if you become ill (see Instructions for the sick person).

Seek health care if the sick person:

- Has underlying medical conditions, is pregnant, is under 2 years of age or is 65 years of age and older;
- Has questions or concerns about his/her symptoms or overall health.

Seek emergency care if the sick person:

- Has difficulty breathing or chest pain;
- Has purple or blue discoloration of the lips;
- Is vomiting and unable to keep liquids down;
- Has signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing and/or absence of urination. A sign of dehydration in infants is a lack of tears when they cry;
- Has a seizure;
- Is less responsive than normal or becomes confused.

For additional information, please contact the: Middlesex-London Health Unit at 519-663-5317 ext. 2330; Elgin St. Thomas Public Health at 519-631-9900; or Oxford County Public Health and Emergency Services at 519-539-9800 ext. 3406.