

“What Can I Do?” - Home Care

During this outbreak of influenza assume you have it if you have the symptoms. The tests for the disease won't be back in time to make a difference. Healthy adults and children don't need to see a doctor for influenza. The primary treatment is supportive. There are some specific antiviral medications but these provide marginal benefit when used in otherwise healthy individuals.

If you're under regular treatment for a chronic medical condition, consult by phone with your health care provider should you suspect that you have the symptoms of influenza. Healthy adults and children should be treated at home as long as the signs and symptoms are stable.

In children

emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- ✘ Fast or troubled breathing
- ✘ Bluish skin color
- ✘ Refusal to drink enough fluids
- ✘ Not waking up or not interacting
- ✘ Being so irritable that child does not want to be held
- ✘ Appearance of a rash
- ✘ Child improves then become significantly worse

In adults

emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- ✘ Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- ✘ Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- ✘ Sudden dizziness
- ✘ Confusion
- ✘ Severe or persistent vomiting

Supportive treatment consists of rest, fluids, some salt and anti-fever drugs. Any fluid that contains no caffeine or alcohol is fine. Canned soups can provide the necessary salt. People with influenza should be offered a cup of water, soda or juice multiple times throughout the day. Similarly they should be encouraged to drink a cup of soup a couple times a day. Adequate control of the fever will offer the most relief. The fever medications should be taken on a scheduled basis and not only when the fever spikes. One recommended approach would be to take Motrin and Tylenol alternately every four hours for three to four days. In this example, you would take Motrin followed by Tylenol four hours later. Do not exceed the recommended daily intake for each drug.