

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” 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.



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 fluid 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.

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.

