

Persons who may be at higher risk for complications of flu include persons with chronic respiratory, heart, kidney, liver or neurological disease, immunosuppression (whether caused by disease or treatment), diabetes, haemoglobinopathies, people aged 65 years and older, children under the age of 5 years (especially those less than 2 years), people on medication for asthma, those who are severely obese and pregnant women. If you are not sure if your child(ren) are at higher risk of flu complications, please check with your family doctor.

Prevent the transmission of flu by doing the following at all times

- Make sure your child's hands are washed regularly with soap and water especially after coughing or sneezing. Hand drying facilities at school must not be shared between people with the exception of electric hand dryers and roller towels. Students may be asked to bring in and use their own individual towels. Assistance with hygiene may be required for children unable to do it for themselves.
- Have your child cough and sneeze into a tissue or into his or her elbow or shoulder if a tissue is not available. Dispose of tissues immediately as household rubbish.
- Wash hard surfaces such as kitchen worktops, door handles, etc. with a normal household cleaner as the virus can live on these surfaces.
- Keep your child away from people who have symptoms of flu.
- When there is a lot of flu in the community people who are at risk of complications of flu should seek medical advice as to whether there is a need to take any precautions regarding attending public gatherings.
- The HSE recommends that you get your child the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 flu vaccine when offered.

Recognize if your child is sick

It is important to watch carefully for the signs and symptoms of flu. Flu usually presents with sudden onset of fever (temperature over 38° C) and cough or sore throat. Other symptoms can include runny or stuffy nose, limb or joint pain, headache, vomiting or diarrhoea. Your child might have a fever if he or she feels warm, has a flushed appearance or is sweating or shivering. If your child is at high risk of complications of flu and you think your child has flu you should contact your doctor to discuss whether there is a need for antiviral medicines. These are recommended to be started as soon as possible for those at high risk of flu complications. Watch for emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention including:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or grey skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not urinating or no tears when crying
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough.

Caring for persons with the flu

- Persons with suspected flu should remain at home for 7 days from when symptoms began.
- If your child has a fever, use fever-reducing medicines such as paracetamol or ibuprofen. Aspirin should not be given to children or teenagers.
- Make sure sick people get plenty of rest and drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.
- Keep sick household members in a separate room in the house as much as possible to limit contact with household members who are not sick. If available and tolerated, the sick person should wear a facemask when sharing common spaces with other household members to help prevent spreading the virus to others.