



## CARING FOR CHILDREN/INFANTS WITH H1N1 AND SEASONAL INFLUENZA

Influenza (the flu) is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs caused by a virus. There are a number of different viruses that can cause the flu. As with other viral illnesses, **antibiotics do not work against an influenza virus**. For any child sick with these flu symptoms, call your pediatrician's office before taking your child in for treatment.

### **EARLY SYMPTOMS USUALLY INCLUDE:**

- Sudden fever of 100.4°F or higher;
- Cough, runny or stuffed nose;
- One or more of the following: sore throat, muscle aches, headache, chills, or physical exhaustion.
- Children may also feel sick to their stomach, vomit or have diarrhea.

Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2, are more likely to get flu complications than older children. Parents/guardians should talk to their pediatrician about whether they should be checked if they have flu symptoms. Children with some chronic illnesses like asthma or other lung problems, diabetes, weakened immune systems, kidney disease, heart problems and neurological and neuromuscular disorders are also at greater risk for getting sicker with the flu. Ask your pediatrician if antivirals (Tamiflu) are recommended for your child.

### **TO KEEP THE FLU FROM SPREADING: ISOLATE**

- If your child is sick, he/she should be kept home from daycare or school.
- The sick child should be kept home until fever has been gone (temperature less than 100°F) for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
- All family members should wash hands frequently.
- If mother of a baby is sick with flu, whether breastfeeding or formula feeding, it is important to try to protect the baby from infection. Wash hands before feeding, change your shirt or put a clean blanket or towel over your chest and lap before taking the baby, and wear a mask while you feed or care for your baby. If you are too sick to feed the baby yourself, someone who is not sick can feed the baby a bottle of your expressed milk or formula.

### **HOW TO REDUCE FEVER AND OTHER DISCOMFORTS**

- Dress your child in lightweight clothing and keep the room temperature around 68°F.
- Take acetaminophen/Tylenol or ibuprophen/Advil/Motrin (for children older than 6 mo.).
- Do not give aspirin to anyone under 18 years of age unless they are already taking it for a chronic condition, because it can lead to brain and liver damage (Reye's Syndrome).
- Do not give cool baths or use alcohol rubs.
- Try saline nose drops or spray/rubber section bulb to relieve a stuffy nose or calm a cough.
- Elevate the head of the bed; babies may be more comfortable in a car seat or a baby swing.
- Use a humidifier, except with asthmatic children. Refill with clean water often.

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### HYDRATION/NUTRITION

- Encourage children to eat small, nutritious meals, even if not hungry. If nauseated, restrict to fluids. Offer oral rehydration solution e.g. Pedialyte®, water or juice often while the child is awake.
- If the child 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 child vomits before giving more fluid.

### **FOR BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS**

It is very important that you continue to breastfeed your baby or feed your baby your expressed milk even if you or the baby has flu. Human milk is full of substances that help protect babies from viruses and other infections. The best thing you can do is to continue to give your baby your milk. Breastfed babies are less likely to get sick, and if they do get sick, they often have less serious infections. You can continue to breastfeed if you are taking medications to prevent the flu or treat the flu. If your baby has flu, breastfeed frequently if the child is breastfed; or offer a bottle often if formula- or cow's milk-fed. Babies who are breastfed and vomit should continue to nurse, but offer smaller amounts.

### **IF YOUR CHILD HAS THESE SYMPTOMS – CALL YOUR PEDIATRICIAN IMMEDIATELY**

- Trouble breathing or fast breathing
- Fever of 100.4°F or higher in a child less than 6 months old
- Fever lasting more than 5 or 6 days
- Not drinking well
- Not urinating as much as usual
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Being irritable even after the fever goes down
- Not waking up normally or not interacting normally
- Rash
- The fever goes down and flu symptoms seem to be getting better, but then get worse again a day or two later

### **TAKE YOUR CHILD IMMEDIATELY TO A HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OR CALL 911**

#### **IF YOUR CHILD:**

- has severe trouble breathing or blue lips;
- is limp or unable to move;
- is hard to wake up or does not respond;
- has a stiff neck;
- seems confused; or
- has a seizure (convulsion/fit).