

If anyone in your home has influenza these three things will help stop it from spreading:

1. Clean hands often

Either wash your hands thoroughly (for at least 20 seconds) with soap and water and dry them carefully, particularly after being with a sick person and before eating or handling food; or use an alcohol-based hand rub and allow hands to air-dry.

Cover cuts and broken skin with a waterproof dressing.

2. Cover coughs & sneezes

People who are coughing or sneezing should avoid close contact with others. Cough or sneeze into a tissue and dispose of used tissues straight away. Alternatively cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.

3. Don't share germs

Anyone with influenza must stay home from work or school until they are no longer sick.

If you have the flu and need supplies, ask a well relative or friend to get them for you.

For specific advice on looking after yourself or caring for a sick person:

Call your General Practice or GP after hours number.

Healthline is also available for 24-hour free health advice on 0800 611 116.

In an emergency, always call 111.



South Canterbury
District Health Board

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COPING WITH THE FLU AT HOME



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Looking after the sick, including yourself.

Getting help for sick people in South Canterbury If someone in your family is sick, phone your usual General Practice number any time of the night or day. After hours, a nurse will advise you on what to do. Seek help early, especially if the sick person has underlying health problems like asthma or diabetes, or if they are pregnant.

Please don't bring your germs to your general practice unless advised to go there, and stay away from hospital unless it's an emergency. *In an emergency, always call 111.*

Treat the symptoms

To reduce fever and relieve aches and pains, take over the counter medication such as paracetamol. Always follow dosage advice on the packaging or from your General Practice or pharmacy.

A cool (not cold) wet facecloth to the forehead will also help lower body temperature. Do not wrap up or warm someone who has a fever, or if they are shaking or have the 'chills'.

When taking someone's temperature, wipe the thermometer with disinfectant after each use. A normal temperature is 37 degrees Celsius, but may be up to 38 degrees.

Drink plenty of fluids

People need up to two litres (eight cups) of fluid a day. Ensure the sick person keeps taking fluids in small amounts taken often. Water is fine but when you are sick, cold drinks containing a little sugar and electrolytes such as "sports" drinks or fruit juice, diluted with plenty of water are better.

Breast milk is best for babies.

Avoid drinks that contain alcohol and caffeine.

Appetite

People with flu may not feel like eating. Do not try to get them to eat if they have no appetite, it is more important that they get enough fluids. When they begin to feel better, slowly reintroduce solids.

Prevent the spread of influenza

Clean surfaces and objects that have been touched by the sick person especially telephones, door handles and toilet and bathroom areas. Wipe with disinfectant or one teaspoon (5 ml) of bleach diluted with 500ml of water.

Do not share eating utensils and drink bottles with other members of the family and wash dishes in hot water, either by hand or in the dishwasher.

Machine wash, rather than hand wash clothes and linen, and dry thoroughly. Use a stain remover for heavily soiled items and wash separately.

Wash hands after contact with sick people or with things they have touched.

Watch for danger signs

Note the sick person's temperature, fluid intake, and symptoms. This will help when asking for advice. Seek advice if symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Confusion or disorientation
- Coughing up blood
- Vomiting that does not ease
- Symptoms that reduce, then suddenly get worse
- Dehydration that doesn't improve through drinking
- Temperature above 38c which doesn't settle with paracetamol

Getting medications or any other pharmacy items

If you may be infectious and need medications, telephone your pharmacy for advice - please don't visit. Discuss with them how you will get your medications - a family member or friend may need to collect them.