



**Sage Advice 9.09**

Student Health Service (773) 549-7757

## **INFLUENZA LIKE ILLNESS**

The recent term “Influenza Like Illness” is used to describe illnesses that might be flu. This includes both seasonal flu and H1N1. Mixed with this group of flu illness will be routine colds, Strep throat, mono and such. Undoubtedly, some people with “the usual suspects” also will be told they have “Influenza Like Illness.”

### **Symptoms:**

Usually abrupt onset of symptoms: sore throat, cough, congestion, muscle aches, sometimes GI complaints such as nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea. Onset is abrupt and relatively severe. “Hit by truck” sick, not sniffles sick. Fever > 100° is an important part of the case definition. Because Tylenol, ibuprofen and aspirin reduce fever, they should be stopped occasionally and your fever measured about 4 hours later.

**IF YOU HAVE AN UNDERLYING ILLNESS OR CONDITION, PLEASE SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION. Asthma, Diabetes, Morbid Obesity, Pregnancy, Heart and Liver disease, Cancer and Immune deficiencies all increase your risk.**

### **Recommendation for Most People**

Most people with no underlying illness and with the set of symptoms for “Influenza Like Illness” should simply self-isolate. They need not see a health care provider. Going out can spread the illness to others, and seeing health care providers can clog the system.

### **Self-Isolation**

If you have no underlying condition, the most likely course of illness with either flu is to be sick for 3 to 4 days, then get well. You will be sick, and you should take care not to infect others. This is called “self isolation.” It is recommended, but voluntary (not a quarantine).

### **Where to Go**

If your parent’s, relative or friend’s home is near, go there by car. Do not fly, take the train or use any public transportation. If you do not have this option, self isolate in your dorm or apartment. If you stay in your dorm, let your RA know. Call, text or e-mail your job and your professors. Do not be the “reliable one” who goes to class or school and accidentally infects everyone. Notes will not be required to return to class. Do not go to class, work, parties or public events. Remain mostly in your room. Let others know that you are ill and to please check on you. If you must go out, wear a mask.

Send someone for over-the-counter medicines (see list below) juices, broth, Gatorade, etc., a thermometer, wipes and tissues. Do not go to the store yourself. Send someone. Wear a mask if you must go out to the doctor. Otherwise, do not go out!

The typical flu – either type – lasts 3 to 4 days. Once your fever is below 100° without medication for 24 hours, you are no longer contagious and may resume your normal routine. Do not try to get a note from your doctor. Just go back to school and work and notify your professors and employers that you were ill.

### **What about my roommates and family?**

Transmission of both H1N1 and seasonal flu (and most respiratory illness) is by droplet. Your cough and germs travel 6 feet maximum, then fall to the floor, counter, etc. They do not remain in the air. They do remain on surfaces – faucets, sinks, counters, doorknobs, hands, so hand washing and wipes are important. Cover your cough and keep your distances.

People are contagious for up to 24 hours before they become ill. Your roommates and family should watch themselves for symptoms.

**If the “well” roommate or family member has an underlying medical condition** (see list above) they should arrange to get out of the apartment or dorm, and they should be seen by a medical care provider. Antiviral flu medications may be needed. **DO NOT ASK YOUR ROOMMATE TO DISCLOSE PERSONAL MEDICAL INFORMATION. JUST SHOW THEM THE LIST DISCRETELY.**

**When Are Office Visits Important?**

If you have no underlying illness, but have the above symptoms AND fever > 100°, you should self-isolate but need not see a doctor. If you do visit, we will examine and recommend, but the most likely recommendation is to self isolate and do self-care.

If you are in a risk group, then you should be seen and usually offered antiviral therapies. Antiviral drugs work against the flu, but prescriptions should only be offered to high-risk patients and those who have become seriously ill.

If you are sick and getting worse or not doing well, you should be seen by a doctor.

**IF YOU ARE NOT DOING WELL CALL YOUR DOCTOR OR STUDENT HEALTH**

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**Self-isolation – Self Care**

**Rest** – very important

**Diet** – fluids are critical. Gatorade replaces much of what is lost when you are ill. Avoid fatty foods. Simple, digestible foods are the best. Popsicles help sore throats.

**Medications** for specific symptoms help, but do not treat the illness.

**Fever** – Ibuprofen 2 x 200 mg. taken three x day or Acetaminophen (Tylenol) with food. (Acetaminophen is easier on the stomach. Stop ibuprofen if you have stomach pains.)

**Cough** – Guaifenesin with dextromethorphan as a syrup or tablets helps to loosen mucous and suppress the cough. Robitussin DM or Generic DM cough syrup or Mucinex DM as tablets.

**Congestion** (nose, throat) Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed) is behind the counter, but does not require prescription – just ID. Typical dose is 30 mg 2 tablets 3 x day. (Avoid with hypertension.)

**Muscle Aches** – Sore throat – the Ibuprofen or Acetaminophen taken for fever should help.

Care Package For Self Isolation • (Can use as SHOPPING LIST)

Sustenance	Gatorade, Broth, Juice	Crackers, rice, bread	Popsicles
Inexpensive thermometer	Tissues	Germ Wipes	Mask
Acetaminophen 325 mg <b>or</b>	NEED ~ 25 TABLETS <b>or</b>		< \$5
IBUPROFEN 200 MG	NEED ~ 25 TABLETS		< \$5
Robitussin DM or Generic Tussin DM <b>or</b>	1 bottle	8 oz bottle	~ \$8 - \$ 9 <b>or</b>
Mucinex DM regular or Mucinex DM, Maximum		Box of 14	~\$10 – 12
Sudafed <u>from pharmacist</u>	30 mg Tablets	Smallest box	~ \$8

Source: Dr. Blair Odland, Sage Medical Group, 1150 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago, IL