

## When Should I Go to the Doctor if I Have Symptoms of the Flu?

### Guidance for the Public during the Influenza Season

Most people with seasonal flu fully recover without going to the doctor or taking antiviral medications. However, some people are more likely to experience complications if they become ill with influenza-like illness.

#### **Talk to your healthcare provider**

Most people recover fully from the flu (influenza) without complications. However, persons at higher risk for complications from the flu or who have already developed severe illness should be treated as quickly as possible after signs and symptoms of influenza-like illness develop.

- **People with influenza-like illness who are at high risk of flu complications** should speak with their health care provider as soon as possible. They include:
  - Children younger than 5 but especially children younger than 2 years old
  - Adults 65 years of age or older
  - Pregnant women
  - Persons with the following conditions:
    - Chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), kidney, liver, blood disorders (including sickle cell disease), or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus);
    - Disorders that that can make it hard for people to breathe normally or to swallow normally (for example spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders, other neuromuscular disorders, certain types of strokes)
    - Immunosuppression, including those caused by HIV or medications (chemotherapy);
    - Persons younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy, because of an increased risk for Reye syndrome.

People with flu-like illness who are taking medications not related to the flu (either prescription or over-the-counter) should check with their healthcare provider or pharmacist before adding any medications to help lessen symptoms of the flu.

#### **Get Emergency Medical Care if you:**

- have difficulty breathing or are having chest pain
- have purple or blue discoloration of the lips
- are vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
- have signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, or lack of urination (or in infants, a lack of tears when they cry)
- have seizures or convulsions
- are becoming confused