

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT?

- One course of antiviral drugs will be issued for each person with swine flu. You should notify a medical adviser if you are pregnant or suffering with renal disease, as a different type of antiviral may be required.
- You should complete the full course of antiviral drugs even if it makes you feel ill.
- If you are having problems swallowing the tablets, you can break them open and mix into a teaspoon of something sweet such as apple sauce or chocolate syrup.
- If you or someone you know has had a suspected side effect from taking the antiviral drugs, please report it online at www.mhra.gov.uk/swineflu or tell your GP.
- Antiviral drugs are not a cure, but they help you to recover if taken within 48 hours of the symptoms developing, by:
 - relieving some of the symptoms
 - reducing the length of time you are ill by around one day, and reducing the potential for serious complications, such as pneumonia.



You should seek medical advice (for example from NHS Direct at www.nhs.uk or on 0845 4647) if you suddenly get much worse or if you are not improving after five to seven days (four to five days in the case of children).

No one with flu should visit a GP surgery.



ADVICE FOR PEOPLE WITH SWINE FLU

Swine flu is a new form of influenza (flu). Flu generally lasts from three to five days and it may take a further few days before you're feeling back to normal. The most significant symptoms are the sudden onset of fever and a cough. Other symptoms include fatigue/tiredness, sore throat, runny nose, limb/joint pain and headache. Diarrhoea and vomiting have been seen in some cases of swine flu.

People are most infectious after they first develop the symptoms of flu, and they can continue to be infectious for several days – typically for up to five days in adults and seven in children.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Have plenty to drink – you lose a lot of fluid during a fever.
- Rest – preferably by staying in bed.
- Taking paracetamol or aspirin will reduce fever and muscle aches. (Note that aspirin should not be given to children under 16 years of age, unless on the advice of a doctor. Note that pregnant women should not take ibuprofen but can take paracetamol and codeine. Your local pharmacist will be able to advise you.)
- Avoid smoking and alcohol.
- A course of antibiotics will have no effect against the flu virus but may be prescribed for the bacterial infections that sometimes follow or complicate flu.



WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT OTHERS FROM CATCHING FLU?

- The single most effective thing you can do to protect others from catching flu and to slow the spread of the virus is to stay at home until you are well and follow good hygiene practices.
- Use clean tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Bin the tissues after one use.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water or a sanitiser gel often.
- Use normal household detergent and water to clean surfaces that are frequently touched by hands.



Catch it. Bin it. Kill it.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS?

- A secondary bacterial chest infection, which develops in addition to the viral infection, is the most common complication of seasonal flu. This can develop into pneumonia and become serious. A course of antibiotics will usually cure this.
- Rarely, other complications of flu such as encephalitis may occur. The risk of complications and serious illness is higher among the following groups of people:
 - those aged 65 years and older
 - babies and infants
 - people with other medical conditions (eg long-term heart, lung or kidney disease or diabetes, or those with a weakened immune system due to treatment or disease).

