

Feed those who are sick as appropriate:

People with flu will not feel like eating. Do not try to get them to eat; it is more important to ensure they are having enough fluids.

When they begin to feel better, offer different fluids, e.g., diluted fruit juice, clear or strained soups, sweetened tea, or jelly. Slowly introduce solids, e.g., dry white toast, water crackers, or pasta. Avoid anything that contains fats or oils. Add canned fruit and thicker soups (chicken soup) to the range of foods, and lastly introduce milk and other milk products, together with fruit, vegetables, breads and cereals.

Prevent the spread of influenza:

Clean surfaces and objects that have been touched by the sick person daily. Influenza viruses can live up to 48 hours on hard surfaces. This means wiping telephones, door handles and toilet and bathroom areas, etc with a disinfectant.

One of the most effective and cheapest disinfecting solutions to clean these surfaces is a solution of 1 teaspoon (5 ml) of bleach (such as Janola) to 500 ml of water.

Do not share items such as eating utensils and drink bottles with other members of the family and ensure dishes are washed using hot water either by hand or dishwasher.

When washing clothes and linen, use regular washing detergent and either hot or cold water in a normal machine wash, then hang linen on a clothes line. If linen is stained or contaminated with secretions then soak in a product such as Napisan and wash separately.

1. **Cover coughs and sneezes**

2. **Wash and dry hands often**

3. **If you're sick, stay away from others**

Keep a record of progress:

Note down the sick person's temperature, fluid intake, and symptoms. This can be used to monitor any improvement or deterioration and will assist in gaining appropriate follow up.

Seek advice if you note any of the following:

- Shortness of breath.
- Pain in the chest.
- Confusion or disorientation.
- Coughing up bloody sputum.
- Vomiting that does not go away.
- Symptoms improve and then suddenly become worse.
- Dehydration that can not be corrected with oral fluids.

To organise how you will get your medications or any other pharmacy items you may need:

- Telephone, don't visit your pharmacy if you are unwell with influenza.
- Discuss how you will get your medications with your pharmacy.
- Seek medical advice before taking antiviral medication.

Includes:

Five important steps to stop the infection from spreading

Importance of drinking, plus drink recipes

Monitoring the fever

Feeding those who are sick

Preventing the spread of influenza

Keeping a record of progress



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How to protect yourself and care for your family with the flu

MANAGING IN THE HOME

TARANAKI DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD

For further information visit www.tdhb.org.nz

If you or a family member becomes unwell with influenza you need to follow 5 important steps to stop the infection from spreading and to care for the sick person.

1 Keep your hands clean

Wash and dry your hands carefully to stop germs from spreading. Repeat hand-washing before and after making hand-to-face contact or touching any item that may have germs on it, such as door handles.

- You can use plain liquid soap and water to wash your hands. Wash them for at least 20 seconds and then dry them thoroughly with a paper towel and throw it away.
- You can also use an alcohol-based hand rub (from your local chemist or supermarket). Apply enough to keep your hands moist for a minimum of 15 seconds (about ½ teaspoon). Put it on the palm of one hand and rub your hands together covering all surfaces until dry. Do not dry with a towel.
- Keep germs out of any cuts, grazes, or areas of broken skin. Use gloves if you can and cover these areas with a waterproof dressing.



2 Cover your coughs & sneezes

If you or members of your family are coughing or sneezing it is important to avoid close contact with other people.

- Remember to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and always put your used tissue into a rubbish tin.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Don't spit, and cover your mouth and nose when clearing your throat or nose.
- Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.



3 Don't get close to others

If you or members of your family have the flu, the people who are sick must stay home from work and/or school. Discourage visitors from dropping in to see any sick family members. Make sure the sick people do not attend any social or sporting gatherings. Although this may mean social isolation for the sick people, it will help to prevent others from getting the flu.

Try to avoid activities such as shopping and arrange for someone who is well to buy any essential items for you.

If you need to go out in public keep your distance by:

- Standing at least 1 metre from people.
- Avoiding those who may be coughing or sneezing.
- Avoiding any physical contact with people where possible, e.g., handshaking, kissing, hugging.

4 Keep rooms well aired

Influenza can spread where there is not enough ventilation. Open your windows, or if you have an air conditioning system, make sure it is properly maintained.

5 Care for those who are sick

If someone in your family becomes sick, phone your local doctor or practice nurse if you need medical advice. We need to keep doctors' waiting rooms flu-free.

A person with influenza could be sick for up to two weeks. Try to keep sick family members away from the rest of the family as much as possible, e.g. encourage them to stay in their own bedroom instead of spending time on the couch in the living room. If, however, more than one person becomes sick then they may share a room.

The main concerns are dehydration and fever.

When you are ill you may need help from other people to care for you or others you are responsible for, including pets. Ask your friends or family, neighbours, colleagues or community groups to assist you. When you have fully recovered you can help others who are sick.

Keep the person drinking:

They need up to 2 litres (8 cups) of fluid a day, even if they don't feel thirsty. The best drinks are cold drinks that contain a little sugar and electrolytes, such as:

- Electrolyte drinks: Enerlyte or Pedalyte (from your chemist).
- Home-made electrolyte drinks.
- Dilute soft drinks and fruit juice – but add plenty of cold water – a cup of juice to 6 cups of water.
- For babies: breast milk.

Avoid drinks that contain alcohol and caffeine, or solids such as milk drinks or fruit juice with pulp in them – but any non-alcoholic drink is better than no drink – so let the sick person choose something they can manage.

Vomiting and/or diarrhoea make dehydration worse, so ensure they keep taking fluids, even if it is only small sips often.

Signs they aren't getting enough to drink:

- Weakness and lethargy.
- Dizziness when sitting or standing up.
- Headache.
- Dry mouth.
- Dark-coloured urine.

Important: If you cannot assess the hydration state of your family member, or have concerns, please phone your General Practice team or Healthline 0800 611 116 for advice.

Home-made rehydration drinks:

Mix well, cover, and store in a cool place

Recipe One:

- 1 litre water
- 3 tablespoons sugar or honey
- ½ teaspoon salt

Recipe Two:

- 750 ml water
- 250 ml fruit juice
- 1 tablespoon sugar or honey
- ½ teaspoon salt

Check for fever:

Having a fever is uncomfortable and may prevent the patient from eating, drinking, or sleeping, so check their temperature regularly and aim to keep it as close to normal (37 degrees Celsius) as possible.

You should have a thermometer in your first aid kit. To avoid infecting another family member, it is best to take the temperature under the person's armpit. Wipe the thermometer with disinfectant between uses. You can also purchase single-use clinical thermometers from your local chemist.

The best medicine to treat fever, aches, and pains is paracetamol (or Panadol).

- Adults: take 1-2 500 mg tablets every 4-6 hours.
- Children 6-12 years: take one tablet every 4-6 hours.
- Children under 6: discuss the correct dose of liquid paracetamol with your GP or practice nurse.

The maximum adult dose is eight tablets in any 24 hour period.

Cooling cares will also help to lower a temperature. Apply a cool (not cold) wet facecloth to the forehead.

Do not wrap up or warm someone who has a fever, is shaking or has the 'chills' – if you do this their temperature may become dangerously high.

