Stay at Home Toolkit

for Influenza

Erie County Department of Health

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Stay at Home Toolkit

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Additional Resources are also listed on the back cover of the Toolkit!

Prevention

Prevention

Preventing the Spread of Influenza

Basic Information on what household members can do to prevent the spread of flu.

Prevention ①

Preventing the Spread of Influenza

Preventing the Spread of Influenza (Flu)

Most persons with the flu will be able to remain at home while they are sick. They can care for themselves or be cared for by others who live in the household. This information is intended to help recognize the symptoms of influenza and care for ill persons in the home, both during a typical influenza season and during an influenza pandemic.

At the outset of an influenza pandemic, a vaccine will not be available for several months. However, it's still a good idea to get seasonal flu vaccine (a shot or nasal mist) to protect from seasonal flu viruses.

Know the *symptoms of Influenza*, which may include:

- Sudden onset of illness
- Chills
- Headache
- Stuffy nose
- Feeling of weakness
- Fever higher than 100.4 degree Fahrenheit
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches
- Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain and/or exhaustion occur more commonly in children

Prevent the Spread of Illness in the Home

Flu can spread easily from person to person therefore, anyone living in or visiting a home where someone has influenza can become infected. For this reason, it is important to take steps to prevent the spread of influenza to others in the home.

What Caregivers Can Do

Caregivers need to separate flu patients from other people as much as possible. When practical, the ill person should stay in a separate room away from other persons. Other people living in the home should limit contact with the ill person as much as possible. One person in the household should be the main caregiver for the ill person. Ideally, this caregiver should be healthy and not have medical conditions that would put him or her at risk of severe influenza disease.

Medical conditions as much as considered "high risk" include the following:

- Pregnancy
- Heart problems
- Disease or treatment that suppresses the immune system
- Chronic lung diseases
- Diabetes
- Kidney Disease
- Age over 65

(continued)

Prevention ①

Preventing the Spread of Influenza

Watch for Influenza Symptoms in other Household Members
If possible, contact your health care provider if you have questions about caring for the ill person. However, it may be difficult to contact your usual health care provider during an influenza pandemic. The Erie County Department of Health website www.ecdh.org will provide frequent updates, including how to get medical advice. If special telephone hotlines are used, these numbers will also be on the website and announced through the media.

Wearing surgical masks (with ties) or procedure masks (with ear loops) may be useful in decreasing spread of influenza when worn by the person and/or caregiver during close contact (within 3 feet). If masks are recommended by Erie County Department of Health, to be useful they must be worn at all times when in close contact with the person with the flu. Throw away mask after each use. Wearing gloves and gowns **are not** recommended for household members providing care in the home.

What everyone in the Household can do:

- Wash hands with soap and water, or if soap and water is not available, use an alcohol-based cleanser/hand sanitizer (like Purell® or a store-brand) after each contact with a person with the flu or with objects in the area where the person is located. **WASHING YOUR HANDS IS THE SINGLE BEST PREVENTIVE MEASURE FOR EVERYONE IN THE HOUSEHOLD.**

- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth without first washing your hands for 20 seconds (sing *Happy Birthday* twice). Wash hands before and after using the bathroom.

- Wash dirty dishes either in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap. It's not necessary to separate eating utensils used by a person with influenza.

- Laundry can be washed in a standard washing machine with warm or cold water and detergent. It is not necessary to separate soiled linen and laundry used by a person with influenza from other household laundry. Do not hold or carry the laundry close to your body or face, in order to avoid contamination. Wash hands with soap and water after handling soiled laundry.

- Place tissues used by the ill person in a bag and throw it away with other household trash. Consider placing a bag at the bedside for this purpose.

- Clean counters, surfaces and other areas in the home regularly using everyday cleaning products.

(continued)

Prevention ①

Preventing the Spread of Influenza

Prevent the Spread of Illness in the Community
Stay at home if you are sick. Ill persons should not leave the home until they have recovered because they can spread the infection to others.

In a typical flu season, persons with the flu should avoid contact with others for about 5 days after exposure to the illness. During an influenza pandemic, public health authorities will provide information on how long persons with influenza should remain at home.

You and your loved ones may want to use the Internet as a primary resource. The Internet can serve as a link to outside resources such as: up-to-date information on influenza, medical and social services, and access to food delivery services. The Internet will help reduce the spread of influenza, by allowing ill persons to stay at home.
If the ill person must leave home (such as for medical care), he or she should wear a surgical or procedure mask, if recommended, and do the following:

- Cover mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, using tissues or the crook of the elbow instead of the hands.
- Use tissues to contain mucous and watery discharge from the mouth and nose.
- Dispose of tissues in the nearest waste bin after use or carry a small plastic bag (like a zip-lock bag) for used tissues.
- Wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser after covering your mouth for a cough or sneeze, after wiping or blowing your nose and after handling contaminated objects and materials, including tissues.
- During an influenza pandemic, only people who are essential for person care or support should enter a home where someone is ill with pandemic influenza unless they have already had influenza.
- If other persons must enter the home, they should avoid close contact with the person and use the infection control precautions recommended on this sheet.

Sources: This guidance is based on current information from the Montgomery County, MD Department of Health and Human Services Pandemic Influenza Plan and is subject to change. This document was adapted and reprinted with permission of Public Health – Seattle & King County, WA.

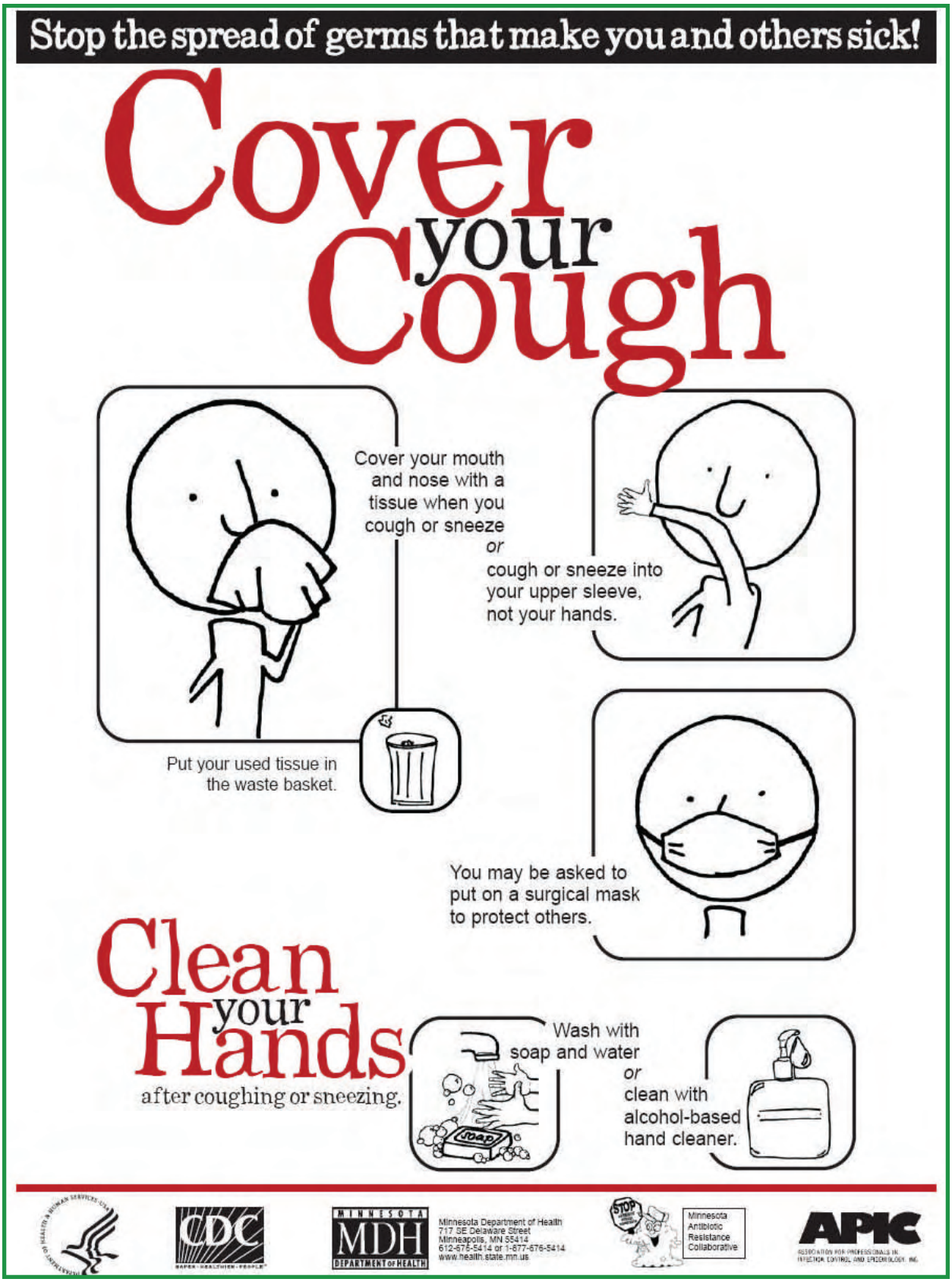
Prevention

Cover Your Cough

Techniques everyone can use to limit the spread of infection when you cough or sneeze.

Prevention ②

Cover your Cough



Prevention

Maintain a Healthy Mind and Body

Important information on how to keep yourself and others mentally and physically healthy during influenza.

Prevention ③

Maintain a Healthy Mind and Body

Things to remember when trying to understand an influenza outbreak or pandemic:

- It is normal to worry about yourself and your family's safety.
- Everyone is touched by an influenza outbreak or pandemic.
- Grief and anger are normal reactions.
- Focusing on your strengths will help you heal.
- Everyone has different needs and different ways of coping.

Common reactions that may occur during an influenza outbreak or pandemic could be:

- Difficulty talking, sleeping, walking, and concentrating
- Increased irritability
- Depression, sadness, mood swings, and crying easily
- Feelings of helplessness

- Worries about loss of income and job protection, especially if asked to stay at home for an extended period of time
- Concerns about those who depend on you for care
- Fears of separation from life activities
- Feeling a lack of control, especially when control is entirely in the hands of others
- Increased boredom

How to keep healthy when staying at home:

- Learn as much as you can about flu, and be aware of normal reactions during a flu outbreak or pandemic.
- Keep to your usual routine, as much as possible.

Prevention ③

Maintain a Healthy Mind and Body

- Have activities on-hand that can prevent boredom (games, toys, etc.) and keep your mind active.
- Contact a mental health professional before, during, and after an influenza outbreak or pandemic, if self help strategies are not helping or if you find that you are using drugs/alcohol in order to cope.
- Keep your living space as comfortable as possible.
- Get plenty of sleep, try to exercise, eat healthy, and relax.
- Establish a family emergency plan that includes where to meet if you become separated, and important phone numbers.

Pay Special Attention to Children

- Let children know it is okay to feel upset when something scary happens.
- Encourage children to express feelings and thoughts, without making judgment.
- Enjoy your child and take part in activities together.
- Turn off the TV and radio, especially if the news makes you worried. If you are worried your child can sense it.

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

ZERO TO THREE: Little Listeners in an Uncertain World, www.zerotothree.org/coping. Myers, D.G. (1985)

Helping the helpers: A training manual. In D. M. Hartsough & D. G. Myers (eds.),

Disaster Work and Mental Health: prevention and Control of Stress Among Workers (DHHS Publication No. ADM 85-1422,

pp. 45-149). Rockville, MD: NIMH. Flynn, B. (1987).

Returning home following disaster work. In Prevention and Control of Stress Among Workers (DHHS Publication No.

ADM 85-1422, pp. 45-149). Rockville, MD: NIMH. Flynn, B (1987).

Workers: A Pamphlet for Team Managers (DHHS Pulbication No. ADM 90-1497, pp. 6-9). Rockville, MD: NIMH

Prevention

How to Use a Thermometer

Steps on using an oral digital thermometer that everyone should know.

Prevention ④

How to Use a Thermometer

Use a digital thermometer, with numbers, not the old kind of thermometer with mercury (a silver or red line). Old thermometers that contain mercury are a danger to the environment and to human health and should be disposed of properly. Please contact Erie County Department of Health Environmental Division at 814-451-6700 for directions on how to dispose of your old thermometers.

Oral Use (basic digital thermometer only)

- Place the end of the thermometer well under the tongue. The mouth should remain closed. Do not bite the thermometer.
- When you hear "beep" sounds remove the thermometer from the mouth.
- Read the numbers on the screen. Normal temperature is 98.6 degrees.

Underarm Use

- Place the end of the thermometer in the armpit so that the probe touches the skin hold the arm next to the body.
- When you hear "beep" sounds take out thermometer.
- Read the numbers on the screen. Normal temperature is 98.6 degrees.

Note: Rectal use is recommended for babies and young children. Instructions for this method are in the thermometer package. There are times when you may have to take an adult's temperature rectally.

How to clean the thermometer

- Use alcohol wipes or a cotton ball (saturated with 70% Isopropyl Alcohol or Rubbing Alcohol).
- Rub the alcohol wipe over the entire thermometer.
- Dry the thermometer with a clean dry cloth or cotton ball.
- NEVER return an unclean thermometer to the storage case.

Note: If taking many temperatures use a plastic cover for the end of the thermometer. DO NOT reuse thermometer covers.

Prevention

Formula for Disinfection

Methods used to disinfect many types of surfaces for better prevention during influenza.

Prevention ⑤

Formula for Disinfection

It is important to clean surfaces such as counters, toilets and sinks, railings, telephones, computer keyboards and mouse, remote controls, and other common surface areas in your house.

Disinfectant	Recommended Use	Precautions
Household bleach may be used in a 1 to 10 ratio with water. For example, to make approximately 1 quart of disinfectant: mix 1/3 cup bleach with 3 and 1/3 cups water. To protect the disinfectant properties of bleach, store it in an opaque container, avoid exposure to sunlight. Remix daily for maximum effectiveness. Clorox® surface spray is a good pre-mixed alternative. Surface disinfecting wipes are also a suitable substitute.	Disinfection of material contaminated with blood and body fluids.	Should be used in well-ventilated areas. Gloves and protective clothing required while handling and using undiluted bleach. DO NOT mix with strong acids or ammonium based products to avoid release of noxious fumes. Corrosive to metals.
Alcohol: E.G. Isopropyl (rubbing alcohol) 70% or ethyl alcohol 60%. Purell® or a similar waterless antibacterial hand hygiene cleaner may be used for hand hygiene purposes.	Smooth metal surfaces, tabletops, and other surfaces on which bleach cannot be used.	Flammable and toxic. To be used in well-ventilated areas. Avoid inhalation. Keep away from heat sources, electrical equipment, flames and hot surfaces.

(Source: The Johns Hopkins University & Johns Hopkins Health System, 2005)

Prevention

Influenza Stay at Home Toolkits

A list of suggested items that should be in an emergency toolkit.

Prevention ⑥

Influenza Stay At Home Toolkits

List of recommended items for people to include in their emergency kits at home:

- **Thermometer (digital preferred)—**information on taking your temperature and cleaning a thermometer is included in this kit
- **Alcohol wipes or cotton balls that are saturated with 70% Isopropyl Alcohol or Rubbing Alcohol (to clean the thermometer)**

- **Fever Reducing Medication (Motrin®, Advil™, or Tylenol™)—**take as directed by a physician

- **Juices & liquids**—hydration is important
- **Bleach**—formula for disinfection is included in this kit
- **Plastic/Paper utensils, plates, cups, and napkins**—to avoid the need to wash dishes used by person (s) with influenza

- **Tissues**—in order to contain respiratory secretions. Dispose in nearest waste receptacle after use
- **Soap and water**—for handwashing
- **Hand Sanitizer (like Purell®)**—to be used if handwashing facilities are not available

- **Trash bags**—to dispose of waste products (e.g., tissues, plastic and paper products)
- **Surgical (with ties) or Procedure Mask (with ear loops)**, **one for each person in the household**—Use only if instructed to do so by Public Health (who will be notified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

- **List of Internet resources for possible delivery of goods and services to your home (e.g., groceries, medical products)**

Caregiving

Care for Families, Friends, Neighbors and Pets

Caregiving

How to Care for Someone with Influenza

Tips and suggestions on methods to care for someone who has the flu.

Caregiving 1

How to Care for Someone with Influenza

During a severe influenza outbreak or pandemic, when people are infected worldwide, the media and healthcare providers will tell residents of Erie County how to obtain medical advice and care. **The following information is a general guide and is not intended to take the place of medical advice from a healthcare provider.**

Monitoring and Comforting

Keep a care log. **Date, Time, What Observed.** Record the following information about the ill person at least once each day or more often as symptoms change, include the date and time. Please see enclosed care log (Cargiving Sheet #2).

- Check the person's temperature using a digital thermometer
- Check the person's skin for color (pink, pale or bluish) and rash
- Record the approximate quantity of liquids consumed each day and through that night
- Record how many times the ill person urinates each day and the color of the urine (clear to light yellow, dark yellow, brown or red)
- Record all medications, dosages and times given

Keep tissues and a trash bag for their disposal within reach of ill person.

Remember that fever is a sign that the body is fighting the infection. It will go away as the person is gets better. Sponging with lukewarm (wrist-temperature) water may lower the person's temperature, but only during the period of sponging. **Do not sponge with alcohol.**

Watch for complications of influenza. Complications are common in individuals with health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and lung problems, but may occur with anyone who has the flu. **If the ill person develops any of the following symptoms, call your healthcare provider.**

- Difficulty breathing, fast breathing, or bluish color to the skin or lips
- Coughing up blood
- Signs of dehydration and cannot take enough liquids
- Difficulty responding or communicating appropriately or appears confused
- Convulsions (seizures)
- Gets worse after appearing to improve
- Is an infant younger than 2 months old with fever, poor feeding, urinating less than 3 times per day or other signs of illness

(continued)

Caregiving 1

How to Care for Someone with Influenza

Medications
Use ibuprofen (Advil™ or Motrin®) or acetaminophen (Tylenol™) or other measures, as recommended by your healthcare provider, for fever, sore throat and general discomfort. **Do not use aspirin in children or teenagers** because it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.

Liquids and Nutrition
If the person is **not** vomiting, offer small amounts of liquids frequently to prevent dehydration, even if he or she does not feel thirsty. If the ill person is not eating solid foods, include liquids that contain sugars and salts, such as broth or soups, sports drinks like Gatorade® (diluted half and half with water), Pedialyte® or Lytren® (undiluted), ginger ale, cola, and other sodas, but not diet drinks or drinks with high amounts of caffeine. Regular urination is a good sign of hydration.

Recommended minimum daily liquid intake, if not eating solid food:

Young children-1 ½ oz. per pound of body weight per day (multiply 1.5 times the weight of the child). Examples:

- A 10 lb. child needs approximately 15 oz. fluid per day
- A 20 lb. child needs approximately 30 oz. fluid per day

Older children and adults-1 ½ to 2 ½ quarts per day (3-5 8 oz. cups or 2-3 12 oz. cans or bottles)

If the person **is** vomiting, do not give any liquid or food by mouth for at least 1 hour. Let the stomach rest. Next, offer a clear liquid, such as water, weak tea, ginger ale, or broth in very small amounts. Start with 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon of clear liquid every 10 minutes. If the person vomits, let the stomach rest again for an hour. Again, try to give small frequent amounts of clear liquid. When there is no vomiting, gradually increase the amount of liquid offered and use liquids that contain sugars and salts. After 6-8 hours of a liquid diet without vomiting, add solid food that is easy to digest, such as saltine crackers, dry toast, soup, mashed potatoes or rice. Gradually, return to a regular diet.

Babies who are breast-fed and vomiting can continue to nurse. Let your baby nurse more often by breastfeeding for 4-5 minutes every 30-45 minutes or by offering small amounts (1/2 ounce or less at a time) of Pedialyte® or Lytren® on its' own every 10 minutes in a bottle.

(continued)

Caregiving 1

How to Care for Someone with Influenza

Tell the person to avoid drinking alcohol and using tobacco. **Do not allow smoking in the house.**

Watch for the Following Signs of Dehydration or Not Drinking Enough Liquids:

- Weakness or unresponsiveness
- Decreased saliva/dry mouth and tongue
- Sunken eyes
- Skin tenting or turgor: check this by picking up layers of skin between your thumb and forefinger and gently pinching for 1 second. Normally, the skin will flatten out into its usual shape right away. If the person is dehydrated, the skin will "tent" or take 2 more seconds to flatten out. This is best checked on the belly skin of a child and on the upper chest of an adult.
- Infants: dehydration symptoms would be fewer than 3 wet diapers in the last 24 hours.
- Decreased output of urine, which becomes dark yellow in color from dehydration. Ill persons who are getting enough liquids should urinate at least every 8-12 hours.
- If the ill person is dehydrated, give sips or spoonfuls of liquids frequently over a 4-hour period. Watch for an increase in urination, a lighter color of urine and improvement in the person's overall condition.

Dehydration in infants and the elderly can be dangerous, seek medical attention immediately if symptoms continue to worsen.

Maintain a Healthy State of Mind

- Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible. **Rest is important.**
- Tell your family why people might be asked to stay at home.
- Tell your family that normal reactions to a stressful event are feelings such as: nervousness, grief, anger, sleeplessness, and sadness.
- Contact a mental health professional before, during, and after an influenza outbreak or pandemic, if self help strategies are not helping or if you find that you are using drugs/alcohol in order to cope.

For children:

- Let the child know that it is okay to feel upset when something bad or scary happens.
- Encourage the child to express feelings or thoughts, without making judgments.
- **Return to daily routines, as much as possible.**

Sources: This document was adapted and reprinted with permission of Public Health – Seattle & King County, WA. Information obtained from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Caregiving

Personal Care Log

A table for tracking a person's health during the flu.

Personal Care Log

Influenza Care Log

(Copy, fill out and bring log sheets to health care provider visits)

Name_____ Name of health care provider_____

Date	Time	Observations*	Temperature	Medications

*Any symptoms such as coughing, confusion, how the person looks; what the person is doing; liquids or foods taken since last observation.

Caregiving 2

Personal Care Log

Influenza Care Log

(Copy, fill out and bring log sheets to health care provider visits)

Name_____ Name of health care provider_____

Date	Time	Observations*	Temperature	Medications

*Any symptoms such as coughing, confusion, how the person looks; what the person is doing; liquids or foods taken since last observation.

Caregiving

Disaster Preparedness Animal Supplies Checklist

A resource for information on taking care of a pet during an emergency.

Disaster Preparedness Animal Supplies Checklist

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS ANIMAL SUPPLIES CHECKLIST

PREPARE YOUR DISASTER KIT TODAY!

FOOD
- Keep at least one week's supply stored in airtight containers
- Rotate food every three months
- Include a can opener, spoon and an extra bowl

WATER
- Keep at least two weeks' supply stored in airtight containers
- Rotate water every two months
- Include an extra bowl

IDENTIFICATION
- Animals should always wear a collar and tag
- Identify your animal permanently with a microchip
- Keep current photos of your animals
- Include yourself in some photos as proof of ownership

FIRST AID/MEDICATION
- Prepare or buy a basic animal first aid kit and book
- Include at least one week's supply of any long-term medications
- Create a collar tag indicating medical needs

CLEANING SUPPLIES
- Prepare a small container of dish soap and disinfectant
- Include several rolls of paper towels and plastic bags

E • A • R • S

EMERGENCY ANIMAL RESCUE SERVICE

NO ANIMAL LEFT BEHIND!

Disaster Preparedness Animal Supplies Checklist

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS ANIMAL SUPPLIES CHECKLIST

SPECIES-SPECIFIC NEEDS

BIRDS, REPTILES & RABBITS
- At least one week's supply of cage liners
- A long-handled net, heavy towel and blanket
- A flashlight and extra batteries
- Extra water bottles or bowls
- An evacuation cage or carrier

DOGS
- Pooper scooper and/or small plastic bags
- Collapsible crate or kennel
- Harness, leash and cable/screw stake

CATS
- Extra litter box and scooper
- One week's supply of litter
- Small plastic airline kennel
- Harness and leash

HORSES, SWINE & CATTLE
- Halter and lead rope for each animal
- Extra feeding bucket, water trough, salt lick and tie-out rope
- Clean garbage cans for large quantities of water
- Two weeks' supply of bedding materials
- Fence panels to create smaller enclosures
- Manure fork

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Caregiving

Guidance for Employees Returning Back to Work After Influenza Illness

Suggestions for someone recently recovered from the flu and who is able to return to work.

Caregiving 4

Guidance for Employees on Returning to Work after Influenza Illness

Overview of Influenza (Flu) Virus Symptoms

Flu viruses are spread from person to person primarily through respiratory droplet transmission (for example when an infected person coughs or sneezes in close proximity, normally 3 feet or less, to an uninfected person). The virus may also be spread through contact with infectious or contagious respiratory secretions on the hands of an infected person or by touching objects or surfaces contaminated with the virus.

The typical incubation period, the time between when a person is first exposed to an infectious disease to when signs and symptoms develop, for seasonal influenza is 1-4 days, with an average of 2 days. Adults can be infectious from the day before symptoms begin through approximately 5-7 days after illness onset. Children can be infectious for more than 10 days after the onset of symptoms. Severely immunocompromised persons can be infectious for weeks or months.

Current Criteria for Employees Returning to Work after Seasonal Influenza

Workers who have become ill with the flu should stay at home until all of the following criteria are met:

- At least 5 days have passed since the symptoms of illness began; AND
- Fever has resolved and has not been present for at least 24 hours; AND
- Cough is improving (decreasing in frequency and amount of secretions with no associated chest discomfort or shortness of breath)

Upon returning to the work environment, employees should continue to follow cough etiquette and hand washing protocols. (See *Cover Your Cough*-Prevention sheet #2).

Criteria for Pandemic Influenza

Experts do not know whether the mode of transmission, incubation period, or contagious period of a pandemic flu virus will be similar to those of the regular seasonal influenza. Because of this, employers must be alert to specific recommendations from Public Health during an influenza pandemic. Management of illness in the workplace, including when it is safe for workers to return to the work, will be communicated through various media as necessary.

Source: This document was adapted and reprinted with permission of Public Health – Seattle & King County, WA.

Stay at Home Toolkit

Resources

Erie County Department of Health

www.ecdh.org

Public Health Information Line 814-451-6700

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov

The Humane Society of the United States

www.hsus.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

www.samhsa.gov

World Health Organization

www.who.org

Erie County Department of Health

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Public Health
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