



The Children's Hospital

From the experts at The Children's Hospital Parents' Ten Most Frequently Asked Questions About H1N1 Flu

1. Does my child have H1N1 flu?

The classic symptoms of H1N1 are a fever with a cough and a sore throat. If your child has flu symptoms and H1N1 is widespread in the community, he or she probably has H1N1. Your child doesn't need any special tests to reach this conclusion. Currently only patients who need hospitalization are tested.

- If your child has a sore throat with a fever and doesn't develop a cough, he or she may need to be checked for Strep throat.

2. How can I make my child feel better?

The treatment of H1N1 depends on your child's main symptoms. To open a blocked nose, use a nasal wash with saline. For a cough, use one to two teaspoons of honey (do not use for children under one year old). Ibuprofen will help a sore throat. To prevent dehydration, encourage extra fluids.

- Check out The Children's Hospital Web site for an Influenza handout with detailed information about treating flu symptoms.

3. My child hurts everywhere. Is that serious?

H1N1 can cause soreness everywhere: headache, back pain, chest pain and leg pain. To soothe sore muscles, give ibuprofen to reduce inflammation. To prevent stomach irritation, always administer pain medication with food. If pain is severe and lasts more than 90 minutes after taking ibuprofen, your child probably should see a doctor.

4. Does my child need to see a doctor?

For serious symptoms such as trouble breathing, rapid breathing or dehydration, bring your child to the doctor immediately. For non-urgent symptoms such as an ear-ache or sinus pain, go to the doctor within 24 hours. Most healthy children with H1N1 don't develop any of these complications and can easily be treated at home.

5. Does my child need Tamiflu?

The CDC recommends Tamiflu for anyone who develops severe symptoms or for High Risk children with any flu symptoms. High Risk children are those with underlying chronic health problems or healthy children under two years old. Tamiflu is not helpful if more than 48 hours have passed since the start of the flu symptoms. If your child is healthy and over age two, he or she should do fine without Tamiflu.

6. How should I treat a fever of 102° to 104°F?

A high fever is over 104 F; a fever is alarming when it's over 105 F. Fevers are not harmful. In fact, they turn on the body's immune system and help fight infections. So if your child is sick, having a fever is beneficial. Only treat fevers above 102 F.

- Visit The Children's Hospital Web site for a Fever Facts handout.

7. It's been three days so why does my child still have a fever?

Fever caused by the H1N1 virus normally lasts two or three days. If the fever lasts more than three days (72 hours), your child may need to see a doctor. More importantly, if the fever goes away for more than 24 hours, then returns, bring your child to the doctor. He or she may have a secondary bacterial infection such as an ear infection.

8. Can I alternate Tylenol and ibuprofen?

It's rarely necessary and we don't recommend it. If your child's doctor recommends it, however, we suggest you only do it for fevers over 104 F that do not come down 2 degrees with one medicine alone. To safely alternate fever medication, administer every four hours, changing between Tylenol and ibuprofen each time. To avoid the risk of overdose, do not alternate medicines for more than 24 hours.

- Do not give aspirin if your child or teen has the flu.
- For acetaminophen and ibuprofen drug dosage tables, visit The Children's Hospital Web site.

9. The fever is gone; why is my child still coughing?

Fever disappears when the immune system starts producing antibodies to fight the virus. The cough normally continues for two or three weeks due to a damaged lining of the throat and windpipe. Recent research showed that honey was more effective at quieting coughs than over-the-counter cough medicines. If coughing is non-stop and interferes with normal activities, however, your child should see a doctor to rule out underlying asthma. 10% of children have asthma and it can be well controlled with asthma medicines.

10. Why is my child vomiting?

H1N1 sometimes causes vomiting. Treat with small amounts of clear fluids every five to 10 minutes. If your child becomes dehydrated or if isolated vomiting without diarrhea lasts more than 48 hours, your child should see a doctor. If your child only vomits after taking Tamiflu, try to hide the bitter flavor in foods such as chocolate syrup. If vomiting continues, your doctor may need to stop the Tamiflu.

H1N1 flu behaves like seasonal flu. Their symptoms and treatment are the same. Most children handle H1N1 well and recover easily.

Remember that the best way to protect yourself and your family is to take basic preventive measures such as washing your hands, avoiding sick people and getting your family vaccinated.

Please consider this information before calling or visiting your doctor.

**Please visit The Children's Hospital Web site for more information:
www.thechildrenshospital.org/flu**

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