



~ Flu – When to Visit a Hospital/Emergency Room ~

Influenza, or the flu, is a more serious illness than a cold and it can have a range of symptoms and effects, from mild to incredibly severe. Most people – including children – can recover from the flu without problems and don't need to go to a hospital or the emergency room. Sometimes, however, it's best to discuss with your doctor or, under certain circumstances, go to a hospital.

When Should I Go to the Emergency Room?

If you have these symptoms or conditions, call your doctor for advice on treatment right away:	If you have these symptoms call 911 or go to the Emergency room right away:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have difficulty breathing • Are dehydrated from vomiting and diarrhea • Have a fever that is at least 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8°C) plus a cough or sore throat • Confusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast breathing or trouble breathing • Bluish skin color, lips, or fingertips • Not urinating • Not waking up or interacting • Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen • Sudden dizziness • Severe or persistent vomiting

What can I do to feel better if I'm experiencing mild or moderate symptoms?

If you or your child is feeling sick, an Emergency Room may **not** be the best option. Someone with mild flu-like symptoms usually can be cared for at home with clear fluids, bed rest and fever-reducing medication (like Tylenol® and/or Ibuprofen (if your child is > 6 months old)). For children do not use Aspirin! If diagnosed early enough, some people may benefit from Tamiflu®, a medication which can be prescribed by your health care provider. Drink plenty of water and stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

What should I do to AVOID SPREADING the flu and protect others?

Cover your cough or sneeze with your sleeve or disposable tissues. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

What can I do to PREVENT getting the flu?

The best way to prevent the flu is to get a yearly flu vaccine and it is **NOT** too late to get vaccinated. If you contract the flu after receiving the shot, the vaccine can reduce the severity of symptoms. The best place to get a flu vaccine is at your doctor's office, but there are also other options, like this flu shot locator <http://vaccine.healthmap.org> and finding clinics through the Alameda County Public Health Department website <http://www.acphd.org/clinics.aspx>.

For more information visit: <http://www.acphd.org/flu>