

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT?

- One course of antiviral medicine will be issued for each person with swine flu. You should notify a medical adviser if you are pregnant or suffering with severe renal failure (kidney failure requiring specialist supervision or treatment), as a different type of antiviral may be required.
- Antiviral treatment is not a cure, but it will help you to recover if taken within 7 days 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 complete the full course of antiviral medicine even if it makes you feel ill.
- If you have a problem swallowing the capsules, you can open them and mix the powder with something sweet, such as blackcurrant squash or chocolate syrup, as it has a very bitter taste.
- If you or someone you know has had a severe side effect from taking the antiviral medicine, please report it online at www.mhra.gov.uk/swineflu or call your GP or pharmacist.



If you suddenly get much worse you should seek medical advice immediately. If you are not improving after 7 days (5 days in the case of children, 3 days for children under 1 year old) you should seek medical advice, for example from NHS Direct at www.nhs.uk or on 0845 4647.



ADVICE FOR PEOPLE ISSUED WITH ANTIVIRALS FOR SWINE FLU

Swine flu is a new form of influenza (flu). Flu generally lasts from 3-5 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 5 days in adults and 7 in children.



WHAT CAN I DO?

- Stay at home and rest, preferably by staying in bed.
- Have plenty to drink – you lose a lot of fluid during a fever.
- Taking paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin will reduce fever and muscle aches. Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine. Note that pregnant women should avoid taking ibuprofen or aspirin unless advised by your doctor or obstetrician, but can take paracetamol. 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 normal household detergent and water to clean surfaces that are frequently touched by hands.
- Use clean tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Bin the tissues after one use.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water or a sanitiser gel.
- A simple way to remember this is...

Catch it. Bin it. Kill it.



WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS FROM FLU?

- A secondary bacterial chest infection, which develops in addition to the viral infection, is the most common complication of flu. This can develop into pneumonia and become serious. A course of antibiotics will usually cure this.
- Not all complications of flu respond to antibiotic treatment. Rarely, severe bronchitis or pneumonia can be caused by the flu infection itself and antibiotics will not help.
- The risk of complications and serious illness is higher among the following groups of people:
 - babies and very young children
 - pregnant women
 - those aged 65 years and older
 - people with other long-term medical conditions (eg asthma, chest, heart or kidney disease or diabetes) and those with a weakened immune system due to treatment or disease.

