



Information for parents

Pandemic flu H1N1: How can I protect my child?

The new „**influenza virus (H1N1) 2009**“ is better known as the „swine flu virus“. It is a new flu virus that spreads quickly because it is very contagious. Unlike other viruses, children and young adults have never encountered this virus before, and this increases the probability of them falling ill in the event of infection. Fortunately, the H1N1 flu is a mild illness that clears up in just a few days in the majority of cases.

What can be done? Five tips to help you protect your child



1: Wash your hands frequently. This virus is transferred easily via the hands. Teach your children to wash their hands frequently with water and soap (or with a hand disinfectant). If your child is still young, you must wash their hands regularly (several times a day). Change towels every day or use paper towels that are disposed of immediately after use by placing them in a closed bin.



2: Recognize the signs of the H1N1 flu! If your child has a **fever, cough** and **sore throat**, they could potentially have the flu. With a high temperature, they can experience **shivering** or **headaches** and be very **tired**. Some children will **vomit, have no appetite**, or have diarrhoea.

If your child displays such symptoms, **keep them at home and contact your paediatrician by phone**. He will ask you a few questions that will help you decide together whether medical consultation is required or not. **Children with an underlying illness or very young children are more likely to be treated with Tamiflu®**. If your paediatrician and you decide on such a treatment, a visit to the doctor is required to obtain a prescription. This is not necessary in most cases and it is best for your child to stay home!



3: How should you care for your child at home? If your child has the flu, **they must stay at home** until they feel better and can no longer pass the virus on to other people. An adult must take care of the child.

Take their temperature: If the child's temperature is higher than 38°C, they have a fever. If they are suffering from the fever, **undress them**, give them a bath (water temperature 3°C lower than the child's body temperature) and **give your child plenty to drink**, whatever they prefer! If this does not reduce the fever sufficiently and the child is still not feeling well, you can give them **temperature-reducing medications**. First, try paracetamol (e.g. Ben-U-Ron®, Panadol®, Tylenol®, Dafalgan®, Acetalgin®, Becetamol® etc). If this is not sufficient, you can give them a **different medication** (e.g. Algifor®, Voltaren®, Mefenacid®, Mefenamensäure® or Ponstan®) after three hours, to reduce the fever. If the fever stays above 38.5°C, you can give these two medications in turn. Do not give aspirin to children with the flu.



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If the child has a severe cough, you can give them cough syrup at night to help them sleep. It is important for them to drink enough fluid to help them cough up the phlegm.

If your child has a stuffy nose, give them **nose drops** (saline solution or possibly decongestant drops) to ease breathing.

Sore throat: The same medications that help alleviate fever will help soothe a sore throat.

If you have received a prescription for Tamiflu®, it is because there are concerns that your child's flu symptoms may be more severe, or because of concerns regarding complications. Tamiflu® reduces virus production and helps promote a more rapid recovery. **The treatment must be started early, i.e. in the first two days when the illness becomes apparent.** Tamiflu® is administered for five days, twice a day, that is, in the morning and in the evening, with food. You must complete this five-day treatment. Tamiflu® can cause stomach ache, diarrhoea and vomiting in some children, usually lasting less than two days. Inform your doctor if your child does not tolerate Tamiflu®.



4: When is an immediate medical examination required? The H1N1 flu usually proceeds without complications. However, complications can occur, even though they are rare. These complications occur more frequently in babies, children with asthma, lung disease or heart disease, a chronic illness or immunodeficiency.

If your child has an underlying illness and is now displaying flu symptoms, phone your doctor or an accident and emergency department immediately. This is important because Tamiflu® treatment must be started as soon as possible, and because certain children require additional oxygen if they have difficulty breathing.

An emergency examination is necessary if the child:

- has difficulty breathing, groans while breathing, breathes very rapidly (more than 50 breaths per minute for a child under 12 months of age, 30 breaths for a toddler and 20 for a school-child), has blue lips, or if the skin is pulled in between the ribs while breathing.
- no longer drinks, has not passed any urine for more than eight hours, cries without tears, has very dry lips, has dark circles around the eyes and sunken eyes, is very tired.
- gazes into space, no longer smiles, no longer plays, is too weak to cry, and no longer wakes up completely.
- is abnormally sensitive and irritable, cries with every touch, cries even in your arms if it can no longer fall asleep.

If a medical examination is necessary, put a mask on your child to protect other sick people, and to avoid spreading the infection to other people.

If you cannot reach your doctor, contact a paediatric emergency ward.



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5: When can your child play with other children again? In the vast majority of cases, H1N1 flu clears up quickly. But infected children are contagious, and will remain so for one week after the onset of the illness. During this time, keep the child away from other children (especially children under five years old), pregnant women and other people with health problems.

Translated from German. In the event of questions of interpretation about the following content, the German version shall be binding.