

FLU TIPS 3/2/16 jr

Drink plenty of fluids.

Use a saline nasal spray or irrigation (ask a pharmacist about a neti-pot or saline rinse) which helps loosen nasal secretions and relieve congestion. Saline nasal irrigation is a safe and effective way to remove obstructing mucus, promote sinus decompression, and remove antigens and inflammatory mediators.

Use a humidifier to help loosen chest, nasal, and sinus congestion. Try a steam shower or get under a towel or in a small tent with a humidifier for 10 minutes if you are congested or having trouble sleeping due to cough. Over the counter and prescription medications that dry your secretions (ex antihistamines) can work against your bodies natural mechanisms to fight infections, leaving you with thicker secretions on your bronchi causing an annoying persistent cough because a drier paste is more difficult to expectorate. Save antihistamines for allergies (itchy, watery, sneezy symptoms). The good news is your body has a substance that helps immobilize and excrete invading organisms; the bad news is it is mucus. Work with your body to heal by keeping secretions loose and flowing.

Avoid getting the next infection - Your hands don't just help spread your infection. They also come back to your face with a world of virus and bacteria. Some people are generally healthy but can't seem to shake a series of infections once they are ill. Cough into your elbow, not your hand. Wash your hands if you do touch your face. You don't have to be compulsive about sanitizing and hand washing, but you should limit bringing your hands to the portal of entry (eyes, nose and mouth) of your next respiratory infection.

For a sore throat - A warm saltwater gargle twice a day may help if you have postnasal drip or a bacterial throat infection. Breathing with your mouth open can sometimes relieve a sore throat within minutes.

Get extra sleep and take it easy. Your body is catabolic (breaking down) using its energy to fight the infection. Workouts won't be followed by the usual anabolic (building up) repair like when you are not sick.

Are there medicines to treat the flu? Yes. There are drugs your doctor may prescribe called "antivirals." These drugs decrease the duration, severity, and contagiousness of influenza and may also help prevent serious complications. The earlier these are started, the better.

Treating fever and aches - Take Acetaminophen every 4 hours or Ibuprofen every 6 to 8 hours as needed to relieve aches and fever over 101 degrees.

Over-the-counter cold and flu medications? ...do not treat the infection or shorten the illness but can decrease bothersome symptoms. Warning: Infant deaths from cough suppressants and decongestants have been reported. Dextromethorphan and Pseudoephedrine are no longer recommended for children under 6. Decongestants are stimulants (speed) that can cause unwanted side effects (ex exacerbate cardiovascular diseases like hypertension and dysrhythmias).

Protect your family. If you become ill, it is not too late to protect the rest of the family with flu shots. We still have \$10 flu shots without an appointment and typically less than a 10 minute wait. It takes 2 weeks to reach full protection from the Influenza vaccine. While the vaccine has multiple strains in it, it does not protect against all strains of the flu. People who get the flu vaccine every year may have partial immunity to future influenza virus even if it was not a perfect match. Even if you got the flu, it is still recommended that you get the vaccine (when you are improving and no longer febrile) to protect you from other strains in the vaccine so you are less likely to get another case of the flu in the same flu season.

Thank you for choosing EMC for your healthcare needs!