

Fall 2009



**Tarrant County  
PUBLIC HEALTH**

*Safeguarding our  
community's health*

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*Director*

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*Medical Director  
Health Authority*

Subject: What to do if you or a family becomes ill from H1N1 or seasonal influenza

TO: Tarrant County Resident

Tarrant County Public Health, the Tarrant County Medical Society, and your physician understand that despite all best efforts at prevention, someone you know, possibly even you, may become ill during this flu season. For that reason, Public Health officials in Tarrant County would like to take this time to remind you about what to do in case this should happen.

Signs suggestive of illness with a respiratory virus, including seasonal and H1N1 influenzas, may include fever, cough, head and/or body aches, tiredness, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, and nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea.

If you or your family member experiences these symptoms, stay home and avoid contact with other people. This means avoiding normal activities, including work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone (without the use of fever-reducing medications), except to get medical care.

If you think you or your family member is at high risk for developing flu-related complications due to a chronic medical condition or you think you or your family member may have severe illness due to a flu virus, it is recommended that you contact your physician or seek medical care. Your physician will determine if flu testing is needed. Your physician also will determine what treatment, if any, including antiviral medications, is needed. Antiviral medications are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body.

If you or your family member becomes ill and experiences any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

- Trouble breathing or fast breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worsened cough

The Emergency Department physicians will determine what type of additional treatment may be needed.

Persons infected with a respiratory illness, including seasonal and H1N1 influenzas, may be ill for as long as a week. Ill persons may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after, possibly longer.

If you have any questions about the health of you or your family member, you are advised to seek the advice of your physician.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sandra K. Parker".

Sandra K. Parker  
Tarrant County Health Authority/TCPH Medical Director