



Antiviral Medications

Two prescription medications, Tamiflu (oseltamivir) and Relenza (zanamivir), have been shown to work against viral samples of the latest strain of H1N1 flu virus (formerly known as swine flu). These drugs are also recommended to treat seasonal flu.

Tamiflu and Relenza work best if taken as soon as possible after the first symptoms of getting sick. The medications may not work if taken after the first 48 hours of contracting the illness. Antiviral medications can be used to protect individuals with confirmed, probable or suspected cases of H1N1 flu. These medications are effective in preventing H1N1 flu about 70% to 90% of the time.

It is important that you contact your primary care provider as soon as you feel the onset of symptoms. Typical symptoms include: coughing, fever, lethargy, lack of appetite, and headache. Some people with H1N1 flu also experience runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. If your primary care provider is not available, call our Nurse Advice Line (866-390-0933) for help in determining how quickly you need care.

Certain symptoms warrant immediate emergency care. If you or your child should experience any of the following symptoms, get help immediately by calling your primary care provider, going to the closest emergency room or calling 911.

Emergency warning signs in children include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that a child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

Emergency warning signs in adults include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend both Tamiflu and Relenza for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with N1H1 influenza viruses; however, they note that hospitalized patients and patients at higher risk for influenza complications should be prioritized. For more information about antiviral drugs and the N1H1 flu, please visit the CDC.