As we move into flu season, states across America are experiencing increasing cases. While California isn’t being hit as hard by the flu as some other states, it is important that Pasadena residents and our neighbors throughout the San Gabriel Valley and surrounding communities take steps now to guard against the flu.

As our community’s leading hospital for more than 120 years, Huntington Hospital is pleased to offer this free information about how to guard against the flu and how to identify whether or not you’ve got the flu.

If you are feeling sick or believe you’ve been exposed to the flu, please do not visit any family or friends in your local hospital until you are well.

**The Flu: How do I protect my family and me?**

Speak to your doctor or local urgent care center about getting a flu vaccine immediately. Many hospitals like Huntington Hospital offer Free Flu Shot Clinics – check with your local healthcare provider to see if they offer them too. The flu vaccine can help protect you from the flu or at least lessen symptoms if you get sick.

- Always wash your hands
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Dispose of used tissues promptly
- Clean hard surfaces frequently
- Make sure children follow these guidelines

**The Flu: What to do if you get sick**

- How do I know if I have the flu?
- What should I do if I get sick?
- What are the emergency warning signs?
- Do I need to go to the emergency room if I am only a little sick?
- Are there medicines to treat the flu?
- How long should I stay home if I’m sick?
- What should I do while I’m sick?

**How do I know if I have the flu?**

You may have the flu if you have some or all of these symptoms:

- fever*
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- body aches
- headache
- chills
- fatigue
- sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

*It’s important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.
What should I do if I get sick?

Most people with the flu have mild illness and do not need medical care or antiviral drugs. If you get sick with flu symptoms, in most cases, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care.

If, however, you have symptoms of flu and are very sick or worried about your illness, contact your health care provider (primary care physician or visit the nearest Urgent Care Center. Visit your local Emergency Room only if you are experiencing severe flu symptoms).

Certain people are at greater risk of serious flu-related complications (including young children, elderly persons, pregnant women and people with certain long-term medical conditions) and this is true both for seasonal flu and novel flu virus infections.

Health care providers will determine whether influenza testing and possible treatment are needed. Your doctor may prescribe antiviral drugs that can treat the flu. These drugs work better for treatment the sooner they are started.

What are the emergency warning signs?

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

In addition to the signs above, get medical help right away for any infant who has any of these signs:
- Being unable to eat
- Has trouble breathing
- Has no tears when crying
- Significantly fewer wet diapers than normal

**IN ADULTS:**
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Do I need to go the emergency room if I am only a little sick?

No. The emergency room should be used for people who are very sick. You should not go to the emergency room if you are only mildly ill. If you have the emergency warning signs of flu sickness, you should go to the emergency room. If you get sick with flu symptoms and are at high risk of flu complications or you are concerned about your illness, call your health care provider for advice. If you go to the emergency room and you are not sick with the flu, you may catch it from people who do have it.

Source: Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
**Are there medicines to treat the flu?**

Yes. There are drugs your doctor may prescribe for treating the flu called “antivirals.” These drugs can make you better faster and may also prevent serious complications. It’s important to know that some of these drugs must be administered within the first 48 hours of onset flu symptoms in order for them to be effective.

**How long should I stay home if I’m sick?**

CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other things you have to do and no one else can do for you. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol®.) You should stay home from work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings.

**What should I do while I’m sick?**

Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from making them sick. If you must leave home, for example to get medical care, wear a facemask if you have one, or cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. And wash your hands often to keep from spreading flu to others. Also use antibacterial hand gels.