

SOUTH SOUND WOMEN'S CENTER PATIENT INFORMATION ON INFLUENZA

There are two H1N1 influenza viruses:

Pandemic or novel H1N1 ("swine flu")

Seasonal influenza A, also an H1N1 virus ("seasonal flu")

They are both spread person to person by infected droplets from coughs and sneezes.

The symptoms are the same:

Fever (greater than 100.0 degrees), cough, sore throat, muscle aches

Vomiting and diarrhea have been reported, but are uncommon flu symptoms

Patients are infectious from days 1-7 after symptom onset or until without fever for 24 hours

INFLUENZA IS PREVENTABLE!!

Cover your coughs/sneezes with tissue or your sleeve

Wash or sanitize your hands frequently

Avoid touching your mouth, eyes, and nose

Avoid sick individuals

Stay home if you are ill

Pregnant women are at higher risk of complications from influenza. **It is recommended that all pregnant women get vaccinated against both seasonal flu and the swine flu.** They can be safely vaccinated at any time during their pregnancy. The seasonal flu vaccine is already available at health departments, drug stores, workplaces, etc. and patients are encouraged to be vaccinated now. The swine flu vaccine is not expected to be available until late October. Pregnant women are being prioritized for the vaccine and SSWC will be administering the vaccine to our pregnant patients as soon as it is available.

For our pregnant patients with concerns about having the flu or being exposed to it: Please **DO NOT** come to the office. Likewise, avoid going to other physician offices, walk-in clinics, or the ER. This is to avoid exposure of other patients and medical staff to influenza. By all means, call the office. We will be prepared to review your symptoms or exposure and advise you regarding appropriate prevention and treatment. If you do have flu symptoms, please let us know as soon as possible as treatment is most effective in reducing flu severity if given within 48 hours of onset of symptoms. Otherwise, the treatment of the flu consists of rest, fluids, and treatment of fever. For fever, the following is safe in pregnancy

- Tylenol (acetaminophen): No more than 8 of the 500mg tabs (2 tabs every 6 hours) or 12 of the 350mg tabs (2 tabs every 4 hours) in 24 hours or liver damage can occur. Check other combination medications you may be taking that may contain acetaminophen so that you do not take too much of the drug.

If you are having persistent high fever despite Tylenol, call our office.