

H1N1 and Your Stay at BC Women's Hospital

H1N1 flu can make some pregnant women, women who have just given birth and children very sick. This flu spreads easily when you are in close contact with people who are already sick with it. We are following these steps to care for you and all women who come into this hospital.

What to expect when you first come to BC Women's

1. We will ask you if you have been sick with the flu or had any of the signs of the flu. The signs of the flu are:
 - ▶ fever
 - ▶ cough
 - ▶ sore muscles
 - ▶ feeling very tired and weak
 - ▶ sore throat

Some people also feel nausea and may have vomiting and diarrhea.

2. We will ask you if you have been in close contact with anyone who has been sick with the flu in the last 7 days. This includes any family and friends.
3. If you have signs of the flu you will be asked to wash your hands, and put on a mask and gown. You will have a test for the flu virus. While you wait for your test results your doctor or midwife will have you started on a medication that fights this flu. It is an antiviral medication called oseltamivir. You may have heard it called Tamiflu. This medication is taken two times a day for 5 days (one pill by mouth – morning and night). Sometimes people feel nausea and have

vomiting for the first 1-2 days they take this medication. Take the medication with food or milk to help your stomach from getting upset. Medical experts feel this medication is safe for pregnancy and to take when breastfeeding. Keep this medication out of the reach of children.

If your test shows that you have the flu, you keep taking the medication for all 5 days. If your test shows you do not have the flu you stop taking the medication.

What to expect during your stay at BC Women's if you have H1N1 flu.

To protect your family as well as other patients and staff in the hospital from getting sick with the flu you will need to:

- ▶ be cared for in a private room.
- ▶ stay in your room
- ▶ wash your hands often.

Your nurses, doctors or midwives caring for you will be wearing masks, gowns and eye glasses when they come in your room.

You and your new baby in the hospital

We are still learning about newborns and the H1N1 flu. We do know that breast milk is helpful in keeping babies healthy.

Your doctor, or midwife and nurse will talk to you about the care for you and your newborn:

You may keep your baby in your hospital room and having a healthy family member help care for your baby. You may breastfeed your baby. It is

important to wash your hands and put on a mask before you feed your baby. Your baby will need to stay 1 arm length away from you when you are not breastfeeding.

Your doctor or midwife and you might decide that your baby should be in a separate room, close to your room for the first 2 days following the birth. The baby can be cared for by a healthy family member. You can express your breasts so your baby can be fed your breastmilk.

Your Visitors

If you have the flu we suggest having only one to two visitors while you are in BC Women's. This is to lower the chances of family members and friends getting the flu. If family and friends visit they must be healthy, with no signs of the flu. They must wash their hands often, and wear a mask and gown while they are in your room. All visitors will be asked to leave the hospital if they have **any** signs of the flu.

Planning For Going Home

Before you leave the hospital plan to have a healthy family member or close friend help you at home. You need time to get better from giving birth as well as having the flu. You will need extra sleep, fluids, and rest.

Your doctor or midwife might ask you to sleep in a separate room and have someone else take of your baby's care such as bathing, and diapering changing, so you can care for yourself.

When you go home....

It is important you keep taking your antiviral medication until it is all finished.

Everyone in your house must keep washing their hands often, and covering their nose and mouth when they sneeze or cough.

Taking care of baby at home

No one with flu symptoms should be caring for your baby or visiting your home. Anyone in your family with flu symptoms need to keep at least 2 meters away from baby. They should be staying in a room separate room from baby.

Remember to wash your hands before holding or feeding your baby or expressing your breastmilk. Wear a mask when you are around your baby if you have a runny nose, cough and are sneezing.

Call your doctor or midwife right away and go to your local hospital if:

- ▶ your flu symptoms are getting worse or you have any problems breathing
- ▶ your baby gets a fever, becomes very sleepy, does not want to feed or has problems breathing.

**For questions and information on H1N1 flu you may call 811
– Health Link BC**