Caring for yourself at home if you’re sick

These self-care tips may help ease common symptoms like coughing, fever, and muscle aches. It’s also important to know when you need to seek medical care.

Take care of yourself

- **Get extra rest.** Bed rest can help you feel better.

- **Drink plenty of fluids.** This helps replace fluids lost from fever. Fluids also help ease a scratchy throat. Water, soup, fruit juice, and hot tea with lemon are good choices.

- **Ease your cough.**
  - Suck on cough drops or plain hard candy.
  - Try an over-the-counter cough medicine that contains dextromethorphan. Some people think it helps them cough less. But check the label first: These medicines may not be safe for people who have certain health problems.
  - Use an extra bed pillow to raise your head. This may help if coughing keeps you awake.

- **Relieve fever.** Fever is a sign that your immune system is fighting the virus. Reducing the fever won’t make your symptoms go away faster, but it may make you more comfortable. If you need to reduce a fever:
  - Sponge your body with lukewarm water. Don’t use cold water or ice.
  - Take acetaminophen (such as Tylenol). It may also help with muscle aches. Read and follow all instructions on the label.

- **Use petroleum jelly on sore skin.** This can help if the skin around your nose and lips becomes sore from repeated rubbing with tissues.

Know when to call for help

Pay attention to your symptoms. You need medical care if you’re getting sicker (for example, if it’s hard to breathe).

- **Call before you go to the doctor’s office or hospital.** They can tell you what to do.

- **Wear a face mask if you have one.** This can help protect other people from the virus.

**Call 911 or emergency services right away if you have any of these symptoms:**

- Severe trouble breathing or shortness of breath.
- Constant pain or pressure in your chest.
- Confusion or trouble thinking clearly.
- A blue tint to your lips or face.

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