



Self-care for respiratory illness

For most respiratory infections, such as a cold or the flu, there is no prescription medication to help treat the illness, and symptoms usually improve within a week or two. The best treatment is to stay home and follow these self-care instructions.

Try these remedies:

- Drink clear fluids, such as water or broth
- Get plenty of rest
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol, others) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others) to reduce fever and muscle aches

Protect your family and those around you:

- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects (e.g., tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles) using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe
- If possible, choose a well-ventilated room in your home that can be used to separate sick household members from those who are healthy

If your symptoms get worse or you have other questions, call the Washington State Department of Health call center to find out what to do.

Call 1-800-525-0127 and press #.

The call center is open from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. You may be on hold for a while – stay on the line until somebody answers. Be sure to tell them that you do not have a primary care provider.

If you decide to go to the Emergency Room, wait in your car when you arrive and call the ER to let them know you are there and have respiratory symptoms. To help prevent the spread of disease, they may bring a mask to your car.

If you go to the PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center emergency department, the address is 400 NE Mother Joseph Place Vancouver, WA 98664, and the phone number is 360-514-2000.