

**Most healthy persons who develop an illness consistent with influenza, or persons who appear to be recovering from influenza, do not need antiviral medications.**

However, persons presenting with suspected influenza AND more severe symptoms such as evidence of pneumonia or clinical deterioration should receive prompt antiviral therapy, regardless of previous health or age.

---Treatment with oseltamivir (Tamiflu) or zanamivir (Relenza) is recommended for all persons with suspected or confirmed influenza requiring hospitalization.

---Early treatment with oseltamivir or zanamivir should be considered for persons with suspected or confirmed influenza who are at higher risk for complications including:

-----Children younger than 2 years old;

-----Persons aged 65 years or older

-----Pregnant women

-----Persons of any age with certain chronic medical or immunosuppressive conditions (asthma, diabetes, immunosuppressive disease- more detailed list below) ; and,

-----Persons younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.

Children 2 year to 4 years old are more likely to require hospitalization or urgent medical evaluation for influenza compared with older children, although the risk is much lower than for children younger than 2 years old. Children aged 2 years to 4 years without high risk conditions (see below) and with mild illness do not necessarily require antiviral treatment.

Treatment, when indicated, should be initiated as early as possible because studies show that treatment initiated early (i.e., within 48 hours of illness onset) is more likely to provide benefit.

**High risk groups:**

-----Chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (heart problems, not including hypertension or innocent heart murmurs), renal (kidney, not including vesicoureteral reflux), hepatic (liver), hematological (blood diseases, including sickle cell disease), or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus);

-----Disorders that that can compromise respiratory function or the handling of respiratory secretions or that can increase the risk for aspiration (e.g., cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders, or other neuromuscular disorders)

-----Immunosuppression, including that caused by medications or by HIV;

-----Persons younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy, because of an increased risk for Reye syndrome