



TAMIFLU FAQ

2018 Influenza Season: Tamiflu Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is Tamiflu?

A. Tamiflu is an antiviral drug. It works by attacking the flu virus to keep it from multiplying in your body and by reducing the symptoms of the flu. It has been found to lessen the time you are ill by a day or two and lessen the severity of your illness.

Q. Is Tamiflu a substitute for the flu vaccine?

A. No. Getting the flu vaccine is the best way to protect against getting the flu and to control the spread of flu.

Q. Should everyone with flu symptoms be treated with Tamiflu?

A. No. Most people who get the flu will have mild illness, will not need medical care or antiviral drugs, and will recover in less than two weeks. Some people, however, are more likely to get serious flu complications. Therefore, antiviral medications are recommended for hospitalized, severely ill and high-risk patients with Suspected or Confirmed Influenza.

Q. Who is considered at higher risk for influenza complications?

A. Persons in this group include:

- Persons with chronic lung disease, cardiovascular disease,
- Persons with renal, hepatic, hematological and metabolic disorders (including diabetes)
- Persons with neurologic and neurodevelopmental conditions
- Persons with immunosuppression, including that caused by drugs or HIV infection
- Women who are pregnant or 2 weeks postpartum
- Persons aged younger than 19 years of age receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- American Indians/Alaska Natives
- Persons with extreme obesity (BMI = or > 40)
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities
- Children younger than 2 years old
- Adults aged 65 years and older

Q. I am at high risk and I have flu symptoms, I've heard it is important to start Tamiflu right away?

A. Ideally, treatment should be started within 48 hours of symptom onset.

Q. I've heard Tamiflu can be given to prevent the flu?

A. Persons who are immunocompromised may be prescribed Tamiflu to prevent flu if they live with someone with flu symptoms or have been otherwise exposed. Persons not at risk of flu-related complications are generally not prescribed antivirals to prevent the flu. Cowell Center Student Health Services providers have limited access to Tamiflu and limit prescriptions to persons with flu symptoms with severe illness and/or high risk and ideally within 48 hours of their symptom onset.