



**American
Red Cross**

of Lee County

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American Red Cross offers H1N1 tips, resources

FORT MYERS, Oct 16 – With the H1N1 (swine flu) virus spreading and seasonal flu season approaching, the American Red Cross is offering important tips for prevention and for people who are sick or are taking care of someone with the flu. The Lee County Red Cross is also working closely with the Lee County Health Department and Emergency Operations Center to aid their efforts to vaccinate the public. Volunteers are needed at each vaccination site and people interested in helping are encouraged to **visit leeec.com**.

The Red Cross recommends the following when caring for someone who has the flu:

- Disinfect door knobs, switches, handles, toys and other commonly handled surfaces.
- Use detergent and very hot water to do dishes and wash clothes; wash hands thoroughly after handling dirty laundry.
- Designate only one adult as the caregiver and ensure this person is not at increased risk of severe illness from either flu.
- Give the best support to the person being cared for by dealing with crisis situations calmly and confidently.

“While they are taking care of people who are sick, caregivers should also remember to take care of themselves and their own needs,” said Lee County Red Cross Disaster Chair Carlene Sharples. “Practice healthy habits such as eating a balanced diet, drinking plenty of water, exercising regularly and getting enough sleep and rest.”

Caring for an ill loved one can be stressful. Common symptoms of stress include sleep disturbances, headaches, muscle tension or aches, a change in appetite, skin problems, anxiety, depression, frustration and overreaction to circumstances. When someone is dealing with a great deal of stress, trusted persons should provide an open communication channel in which that individual can express feelings or ask for help.

The following steps are recommended for those who become ill:

- Stay in a room separate from common areas of the home and avoid contact with others as much as possible.
- Stay at home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone without having to use fever-reducing medicine.
- Get a lot of rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- Consider wearing a facemask when sharing common spaces with household members.
- Contact a healthcare provider about whether to take antiviral medication, or if fever persists, whether antibiotics are needed.

For more information on the flu, visit www.redcross.org, www.flu.gov, or contact your local Red Cross chapter.

The Red Cross is dedicated to helping make families and communities safer at home and around the world. It provides training in life-saving skills and mobilizes relief to victims of disasters in addition to assisting members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families. For additional information about the Red Cross and the assistance it provides, making donations, registering for a class or volunteering, call 278-3401, or log on to arclcc.org. The American Red Cross of Lee County is a proud member of the United Way of Lee County.