

Symptoms to consider when making your own preliminary diagnosis:

Influenza

Antiviral medications can help people feel better if taken within 48 hours of onset of symptoms

- Headache
- High fever
- Dry cough
- Chest pains
- Chills
- Severe fatigue
- Severe aches

NOTE: H1N1 virus also causes some gastrointestinal distress

Cold

Colds are caused by a different virus; symptoms are less severe — and they come on more gradually than flu

- Sneezing
- Stuffy nose
- Hacking cough
- Mild sore throat
- Mild fatigue

Strep throat

A sore throat, but no stuffy nose, may mean it's a streptococcal bacterial infection — antibiotics can help

- High fever
- Pus on tonsils
- Very sore throat

Stomach flu

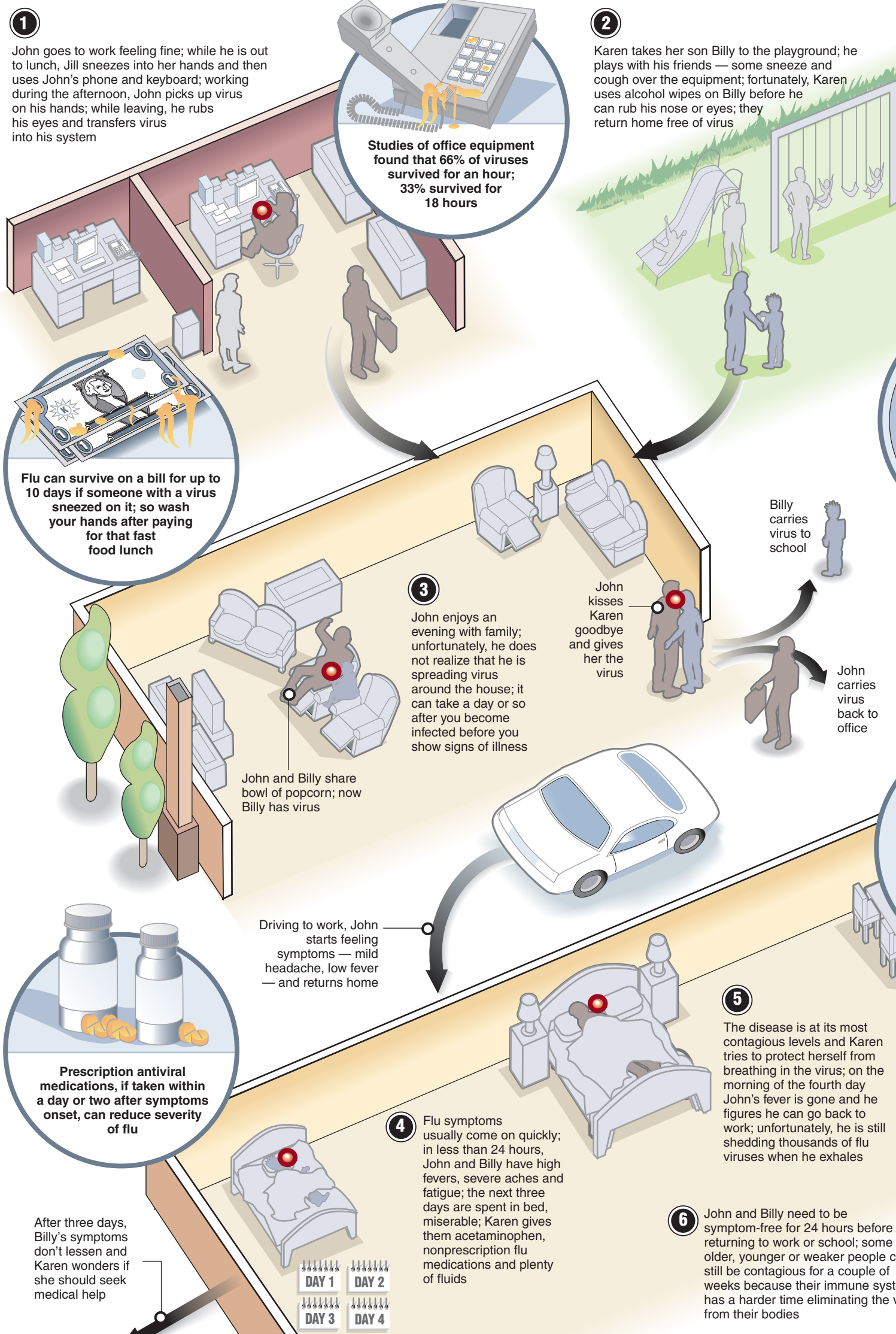
Virus enters via mouth and multiplies in small intestine; symptoms can appear in a few hours, but usually take a day; food poisoning typically is a bacterial infection, such as E. coli

- Headache
- Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea

FOLLOWING AN INFECTION

FLU TRAVELS

Flu viruses constantly mutate, making it tough for our immune defenses to recognize the virus and combat it. Since the current strain of the H1N1 virus (known as swine flu) is relatively new, it may be more contagious than seasonal flu, although it seems no more virulent and most cases should be resolved without significant medical intervention. Here is a look at how flu infections spread:



Health officials recommend most people get a flu shot — including for the H1N1 virus

Vaccination

- Vaccination provides up to 90% protection
- Swine flu shots should be ready by October
- It takes about two weeks before protection begins
- H1N1 vaccination will be in two doses, a couple weeks apart; healthy adults may only need one H1N1 vaccination
- Seasonal flu vaccination is one shot, but for children under 9 they may need two seasonal flu shots, bringing the total to four

Wash hands

Wash hands five times a day for at least 20 seconds; this is what it takes to prevent the spread of germs and viruses; less than half the people wash this long and this often

Wear mask

Masks can be worn by sick people so any droplets they expel do not easily land on objects or people; most masks are not as effective if worn by people who are well trying to avoid breathing in a virus

