

What You Should Know About the H1N1 (Swine Flu) Virus

H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This new virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. This virus is spreading from person-to-person worldwide, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization signaled that a pandemic of novel H1N1 flu was underway.

How Does H1N1 (Swine Flu) Spread?

Spread of H1N1 virus is thought to occur in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something – such as a surface or object – with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Most people who have become ill with this new virus have recovered without requiring medical treatment.

Follow four simple health habits to help keep you—and others healthy.

1. Wash Your Hands.

Frequent hand washing is the single most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick.

2. Avoid Close Contact.

Avoid people who are sick.

3. Cover Your Cough and Sneeze.

If you don't have a tissue, cough and sneeze into your elbow to keep germs off your hands. If you do have a tissue, sneeze or cough into it and throw it away when you are done.

4. Stay Home When You're Sick.

Do not go to work, school, or travel when you're sick. Don't share your germs!

The **Florida Department of Health** has a toll-free number to provide public health information and updates on H1N1 (Swine) flu. The information line is available from 8 AM to 8 PM Eastern, 7 days a week. Information is available in English, Spanish and Creole.

Telephone Number: Toll Free **877-352-3581**



Caring For a Sick Person In Your Home

The main way that influenza viruses are thought to spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are propelled through the air and deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Influenza viruses may also be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or an object and then touches their own mouth or nose (or someone else's mouth or nose) before washing their hands.

People with H1N1 (Swine) flu who are cared for at home should:

- Check with their health care provider about any special care they might need if they are pregnant or have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema.
- Check with their health care provider about whether they should take antiviral medications.
- Keep away from others as much as possible. This is to keep from making others sick. Do not go to work or school while ill.
- Stay home for at least 24 hours after fever is gone, except to seek medical care or for other necessities (Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine).
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.
- Cover coughs and sneezes. Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often and especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into hands.
- Wear a facemask – if available and tolerable – when sharing common spaces with other household members to help prevent spreading the virus to others. This is especially important if other household members are at high risk for complications from influenza.
- Be watchful for emergency warning signs (see below) that might indicate you need to seek medical attention.

Get medical care right away if the sick person at home:

- has difficulty breathing or chest pain
- has purple or blue discoloration of the lips
- is vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
- has signs of dehydration (dizziness when standing, absence of urination, or in infants, a lack of tears when they cry)
- has seizures (for example, uncontrolled convulsions)
- Is less responsive than normal or becomes confused

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What To Do If You Get Flu Like Symptoms

The H1N1 (Swine) flu virus is causing illness in infected persons in the United States and countries around the world. CDC expects that illnesses may continue for some time. As a result, you or people around you may become ill. If so, you need to recognize the symptoms and know what to do.

The symptoms of H1N1 (Swine) flu virus in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include:

- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Cough
- ◆ Sore throat
- ◆ Runny or stuffy nose
- ◆ Body aches
- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Chills and fatigue

A significant number of people who have been infected with novel H1N1 flu virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

If you are sick, you may be ill for a week or longer. You should stay home and keep away from others as much as possible, including avoiding travel and not going to work or school, for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.)

If you leave the house to seek medical care, wear a facemask, if available and tolerable, and cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue. In general, you should avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness, especially people at increased risk of severe illness from influenza. With seasonal flu, people may be contagious from one day before they develop symptoms to up to 7 days after they get sick. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods. People infected with the novel H1N1 are likely to have similar patterns of infectiousness as with seasonal flu.

It is expected that most people will recover without needing medical care.

If you have severe illness or you are at [high risk for flu complications](#), contact your health care provider or seek medical care. Antiviral drugs can be given to treat those who become severely ill with influenza. These antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) with activity against influenza viruses, including novel H1N1 flu virus. These medications must be prescribed by a health care professional.

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