

H1N1 (Swine) Flu and You

Frequently Asked Questions

What is H1N1 (swine) flu?

Novel influenza A (H1N1) is a new flu virus of swine origin that was first detected in April, 2009. The virus is infecting people and is spreading from person-to-person, sparking a growing outbreak of illness in the United States. An increasing number of cases are being reported internationally as well.

It's uncertain how severe this novel H1N1 outbreak will be compared with other influenza viruses. Because this is a new virus, most people will not have immunity to it, and illness may be more severe and widespread as a result.

What are the signs and symptoms of novel H1N1 flu?

The symptoms of novel H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of regular seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with H1N1 flu. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

How do you catch H1N1 flu?

It's thought that novel H1N1 flu spreads in the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread; mainly through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with the virus.

Are there medicines to treat H1N1 flu?

Yes. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment of infection with the H1N1 influenza virus.

What can I do to stay healthy?

There is no vaccine available currently to protect against H1N1 flu. These are some everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding sick people if possible.
- Find healthy ways to deal with stress and anxiety.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others. If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

For More Information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1600 Clifton Rd. Atlanta, GA 30333,
1-800-CDC-INFO or online at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm>



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