

# 2009 H1N1 Influenza



## **What is 2009 H1N1 Influenza?**

É2009 H1N1 flu (called swine flu early on) is a new virus causing illness in people. Outbreaks of influenza happen regularly around the world and cause varying levels of illness.

ÉThere are many types of influenza viruses that change constantly. New viruses may be a mix of swine, human and/or avian (bird) influenza viruses.

É2009 H1N1 flu virus is not the same as seasonal flu virus. Seasonal flu vaccine does not protect against 2009 H1N1 flu.

## **Human Infections:**

ÉIn late March and early April 2009, human cases of H1N1 Influenza infections were identified internationally and in the United States.

ÉOn June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) determined that a pandemic of 2009 H1N1 flu was underway.

## **How Does 2009 H1N1 Flu Spread?**

ÉFlu viruses are mainly spread from person to person when someone with the virus coughs or sneezes.

ÉPeople may also become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their eyes, mouth, or nose.

ÉInfected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick.

- Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

## **2009 H1N1 Flu Symptoms:**

ÉFever (usually high)

ÉCough

ÉSore throat

ÉBody aches

ÉHeadache/Chills

ÉFatigue

ÉSome people have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

ÉAny flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

## **Avoid Contact with Others:**

- If you get sick, it is recommended that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, you should stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone (without the use of fever-reducing medicine), except to get medical care or other necessities.

## **Staying Healthy:**

- Most important: **WASH YOUR HANDS!**
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- ÉCover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try not to touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu viruses.
- Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

**Emergency Warning Signs in Children – Seek Urgent Medical Attention:**

- ÉFast breathing or trouble breathing
- ÉBluish or gray skin color
- ÉNot drinking enough fluids
- ÉSevere or persistent vomiting
- ÉNot waking up or not interacting
- ÉBeing so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- ÉFlu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- ÉHas other health conditions (like heart or lung disease, diabetes, or asthma) and develops flu-like symptoms

**Emergency Warning Signs in Adults – Seek Urgent Medical Attention:**

- ÉDifficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- ÉPain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- ÉSudden dizziness
- ÉConfusion
- ÉSevere or persistent vomiting
- ÉFlu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

**Are Medicines Available to Treat 2009 H1N1 Flu?**

- ÉYes. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid, or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping the viruses from reproducing in your body.
- ÉAntiviral drugs can make your illness milder, make you feel better faster, and help prevent serious flu complications.
- ÉFor treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick ó within 2 days of the start of symptoms.
- ÉAt this time, CDC recommends the use of Tamiflu or Relenza for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with 2009 H1N1 Influenza viruses.

**2009 H1N1 Vaccination:**

- ÉVaccination is the single best way to prevent influenza infection.
- ÉThere is not yet a vaccine to protect against 2009 H1N1 flu.
- É2009 H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and may be available later this fall.
- É2009 H1N1 vaccine is especially recommended for certain groups of people. Please ask your health care provider or local health department.

**Seasonal Flu Vaccination:**

- ÉSeasonal flu vaccine is produced every year to protect against the most common flu viruses for that year.
- ÉSeasonal flu vaccine is not expected to protect against 2009 H1N1 flu.
- ÉIn general, anyone older than 6 months of age who wants to reduce their chances of getting seasonal flu may be vaccinated.
- ÉSeasonal flu vaccine is especially recommended for certain groups of people. Please ask your health care provider or local health department.
- ÉSeasonal flu vaccine is available now.

*This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for talking with a health care provider. If you have any questions about influenza virus, please talk with your health care provider.*

**District Health Department #10**

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