

Swine Flu (H1N1 Virus)

What is it?

The H1N1 flu virus, also known as swine flu, is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. It first appeared in people in the Spring of 2009 and is expected to affect more people in the Fall of 2009 as schools open again. While the symptoms are very similar to seasonal flu, it is a little different in that it is likely to affect the young (6 mos. to 24 years old) and people between 24 and 64 with chronic health issues more than the elderly.

Who is at greatest risk of complications from the H1N1 (swine) flu

The risk is greatest if the person:

- Has a weakened immune system
- Has a chronic heart condition
- Has a chronic lung condition or respiratory system problems
- Is pregnant
- Is under 6 mos. of age

What are the symptoms?

They are very similar to seasonal flu. The most common symptoms include:

- fever
- cough
- sore throat
- body aches
- headache
- chills
- fatigue
- Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting.

How do I care for someone with flu symptoms?

If symptoms develop, the person's healthcare provider (HCP) should be contacted. He/she will decide what type of testing and/or treatment is indicated. People with mild or moderate illness should be cared for at home to prevent spread.

- The person's HCP will advise about any special care a person might need if they have specific health conditions.
- Keep them home until they have been without a fever for at least 24 hours without medication (acetaminophen or ibuprofen) and are feeling well. . This may take 7-10 days.
- Make sure they get plenty of rest
- Make sure they drink lots of fluids. Clear fluids if vomiting and diarrhea are present.
- Be watchful for emergency warning signs that might indicate the need to seek medical attention.

How can I prevent the flu from spreading?

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
- Avoid holding, hugging, kissing, or shaking hands with anyone who has a cold or the flu.
- Avoid touching your nose, mouth or eyes.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue, or into your sleeve rather than your hands.
- Clean items that are touched often like door handles and telephones.
- Stay home from work if you get sick and avoid contact with others.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Dispose of contaminated tissues carefully.
- **Get vaccinated as soon as the vaccine is available to you!**

What should you do?

Seek immediate medical care if symptoms include:

- Difficulty breathing, fast breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain of pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness

- Confusion or not interacting
- Severe or persistent vomiting/ not drinking enough fluids
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Bluish or gray skin color