

# H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)

## What is H1N1 Influenza?

- H1N1 Influenza (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This virus is spreading from person-to-person, in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread.
- H1N1 flu was called “swine flu” at first because it was believed to be similar to flu viruses that occur in pigs. Further study has shown that this is a new virus that is very different from what normally circulates in North American pigs.
- You cannot get this new H1N1 virus from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

## Influenza Vaccinations

- To provide protection against H1N1 influenza, adults and youth 10 years of age and older will need one vaccination. Children ages 6 months to 9 years of age will need two vaccinations 28 days apart.
- Vaccines for H1N1 flu do not provide protection for seasonal influenza. For protection against seasonal flu, a separate vaccination will be needed.

## How Do Flu Viruses Spread?

- H1N1 viruses and seasonal flu viruses are all mainly spread from person to person when someone infected with the virus coughs or sneezes.
- People may also become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

## 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.

- Cover 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.

## Avoid Contact with Sick People

- 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. Stay home until 24 hours after fever is gone without the aid of fever-reducing medicines.

## How Long Can An Infected Person Spread H1N1 Flu?

- People with H1N1 flu virus should be considered potentially contagious from 1 day before developing symptoms and up to 7 days after getting sick.
- Children, especially younger children, might be contagious for longer periods.



**Worth Repeating:  
Wash Your Hands!**

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## H1N1 Flu Signs and Symptoms

- High fever (some patients do not have fever)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Headache/Chills
- Fatigue
- Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting.
- Like seasonal flu, H1N1 flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

## Emergency Warning Signs in Children that Need Urgent Medical Attention:

- 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

## Emergency Warning Signs in Adults that Need Urgent Medical Attention:

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

## Diagnosis

The diagnosis is based on signs and symptoms and knowing the flu activity in the community. A negative lab test does not rule out the flu during the flu season.

## Are Medicines Available to Treat H1N1 Flu?

- Yes. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that

fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body.

- If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications.
- For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick – within 2 days of start of symptoms.
- At this time, CDC recommends the use of Tamiflu or Relenza for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with H1N1 influenza viruses.
- Antiviral drugs are indicated for treatment of the flu in people at risk for complications. These people are:
  - Children < 2 years of age
  - Adults > 65 years of age
  - Persons with chronic medical conditions:
    - Chronic Heart Condition
    - Lung Diseases (including Asthma)
    - Liver Disease
    - Kidney Disease
    - Neurological Conditions
    - Muscular Diseases or
    - Immune Suppression

*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 H1N1 influenza A virus, please talk with your health care provider.*

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This fact sheet was adapted from the Kent County Health Department.