

# Novel H1N1 vs. Seasonal Flu

## What is the Difference?

### Novel H1N1 is a new virus:

The new novel H1N1 swine flu virus emerged in the spring of 2009. It is a novel virus, meaning it is an infectious agent humans have never been infected with.

### Novel H1N1 may affect more healthy, young adults:

Novel viruses are concerning because the human immune system has no previous experience battling them. Although the seasonal flu is most often causes illness to those with weak immune systems, such as the very young and old, the novel H1N1 virus appears to be a infecting mostly healthy, young adults.

One thing that appears to be different from seasonal influenza is that adults older than 64 years do not yet appear to be at increased risk of novel H1N1 infection. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) laboratory studies have shown that older adults have some antibodies against this virus.

A little information on antibodies: Usually when you are sick with a virus, your body builds up a defense system by making antibodies against it, so you do not get that particular virus strain again.

### Novel H1N1 may mean more sickness:

H1N1 became widespread (a pandemic) in July. 2009 novel H1N1 influenza viruses and regular seasonal influenza may spread at the same time. It is possible a lot more people will get sick this season than normally occurs during a regular flu season. There also may be more people hospitalized and more deaths this season than during a normal flu season because more people are susceptible to infection. Novel H1N1 causes more widespread illness, but not more severe illness than seasonal influenza.

### Take everyday actions to stay healthy!

- 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 and mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Get the seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccines when they are available.
- Stay home if you get sick. The CDC recommends you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. Stay home for 24 hours after your temperature has returned to normal without fever reducing medicines.

*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.*

2009 Barry-Eaton District Health Department  
Eaton County Office  
1033 Health Care Dr.  
Charlotte, MI 48813  
(517) 543-2430

Barry County Office  
330 W. Woodlawn Ave.  
Hastings, MI 49058  
(269) 945-9516

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