

SWINE FLU FACT SHEET

(From the Centers for Disease Control)

The H1N1 virus is thought to spread the same way that seasonal flu spreads, mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching some surface or object with flu viruses on it, and then touching their mouth or nose.

PREVENTION:

Take everyday actions to stay healthy:

1. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and discard the tissue.
2. Wash your hands often with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand cleaners and hand sanitizers are also effective. The H1N1 virus can live on a hard surface for up to 8 hours.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
4. Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

SYMPTOMS:

The symptoms of H1N1 flu virus are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu, and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with H1N1 flu virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

TREATMENT:

Fevers and aches can be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®) or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS). Do not give aspirin to children or young adults under 18 since it may cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.

The safest care for flu symptoms in children younger than 2 years of age is using a cool-mist humidifier and a suction bulb to help clear away mucus.

Two influenza antiviral medications are recommended for use against H1N1 flu, oseltamivir (trade name Tamiflu®) and zanamivir (Relenza®). The drugs work best if given within two days of becoming ill, but may be given later if illness is severe or for those at a high risk for complications.

VACCINE:

With seasonal flu, those aged 65 and older are frequently given priority. However this age group appears to have greater immunity to the H1N1 virus than younger people.

Federal guidelines call for the new H1N1 vaccine to be given first to pregnant women, those who live with or care for children 6 months or younger, health care workers, people aged 6 months through 24, and people aged 25 to 64 with chronic health problems or compromised immune systems.

Only after shots are offered to those groups will the vaccine be available to healthy adults 64 and younger. After that, if it is still available, seniors ages 65 and older would be eligible.

To find out if the H1N1 vaccine is available to you, contact your physician or local health clinic.

COURSE OF THE DISEASE:

Illness from the H1N1 virus has ranged from mild to severe. Most people have recovered without needing medical treatment, but hospitalizations and deaths have occurred. The disease usually runs its course in three to five days, but you may be ill for a week or longer. Studies suggest you can spread the virus to others for seven days following the first appearance of symptoms. If you are ill, stay home and away from others as much as possible, avoiding travel and not going to work or school, for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone. (Your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.) If you must leave the house for necessities or to seek medical care, wear a facemask, if available and tolerable, and cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.

EMERGENCY WARNING SIGNS:

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care. Emergency warning signs for children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- 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

Emergency warning signs for adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

For more information, visit the Web site of the Centers for Disease Control:

<http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1FLU/>