

H1N1 Flu: A Guide for the Public

Frequently Asked Questions

What is H1N1 flu?

The current outbreak of H1N1 flu being reported around the world is a new type of flu virus never before seen in humans. Because it is a new disease, health officials are monitoring cases closely. Although it probably came from pigs originally, it has not been seen in pigs in the United States.

Is H1N1 flu contagious?

Yes. H1N1 flu is contagious and can spread from human to human. Everyone should practice good hygiene – wash hands frequently and cover your mouth with your arm, sleeve or tissue when coughing.

How do you catch H1N1 flu?

H1N1 flu is spread through contact with a person with H1N1 flu. Human-to-human spread of H1N1 flu can occur in the same way as seasonal flu. Influenza is spread mainly through coughing or sneezing by infected people.

What are the signs and symptoms of H1N1 flu in people?

The symptoms of H1N1 flu are like those of regular seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and tiredness. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting with H1N1 flu. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 flu may make other chronic health problems worse.

How serious is H1N1 flu?

Most people who have become sick with H1N1 flu have had fairly mild symptoms and have recovered fully. However, there have been some deaths reported from H1N1 flu. Anyone with severe or prolonged symptoms should contact his or her doctor.

How long can an infected person spread H1N1 flu to others?

People with H1N1 flu are likely to be contagious as long as they have flu symptoms and possibly for up to 7 days from when they first become ill. Children, especially younger children, may be contagious longer.

What can I do to protect myself and my family from getting sick?

- Practice everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of flu. Take these steps to protect yourself and your family.
- 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.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- If you get sick with flu, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

What should I do if someone in my family gets sick?

If you or someone in your family becomes ill with flu-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, contact your doctor, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms or if they are severe. Your doctor will determine whether testing or treatment is needed.

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If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others. Do not send your child to school if he or she is sick.

Can I get H1N1 flu from eating or preparing pork?

No. H1N1 flu is not spread by food. You cannot get H1N1 flu from eating pork or pork products.

Should I cancel my travel plans to Mexico?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is recommending that all non-essential travel to Mexico be delayed until further notice. These notices are available on the CDC H1N1 Flu web page at <http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/investigation.htm>