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### **H1N1 (swine) Flu Information**

H1N1 (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. This is a respiratory illness; swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food or eating pork products.

Public health agencies are closely monitoring the H1N1 flu situation. As scientists and public health experts watch H1N1 and seasonal flu currently circulate in the Southern Hemisphere, they point out that this is a rapidly evolving situation and guidance could change. Everyone is encouraged to visit [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/) for detailed, up to date information.

### **Everyday Steps to Protect Your Health**

There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like H1N1 flu.

- 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 or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home if you are sick for 7 days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. This is to keep from infecting others and spreading the virus further.

### **Preparedness Starts with You**

Utilize this time to prepare yourself and your family by creating a family emergency plan and stockpiling emergency supplies.

- Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home for a week or so; a supply of over-the-counter medicines, alcohol-based hand rubs, tissues and other related items could be useful and help avoid the need to make trips out in public while you are sick and contagious.
- Make plans for emergency child care in case your child is ill and unable to attend school.
- Have a week’s worth of food, prescriptions, pet food and safety supplies.
- Make sure you have essential communication supplies on hand, such as battery powered radios, flashlights and extra batteries. A complete checklist is available at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) .
- Keep a water supply. For emergency purposes, one gallon of water per day, per person is appropriate.

## H1N1 Vaccine

Vaccines are the most powerful public health tool for control of flu, and the U.S. government is working closely with manufacturers to take steps in the process to manufacture an H1N1 vaccine. Making vaccine is a multi-step process which takes several months to complete. The H1N1 vaccine is expected to be available in the late fall. Vaccine availability depends on several factors including manufacturing time and time needed to conduct clinical trials.

If H1N1 flu becomes more prevalent and there is enough H1N1 flu vaccine for everyone, local health departments may decide to open up Points of Dispensing (PODs) in addition to encouraging individuals to get the vaccine through their normal flu shot provider. A POD is a recognizable location in the community where medications or vaccines will be distributed.

If there is limited supply of vaccine, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified several priority groups that are recommended to receive the H1N1 vaccination:

- Students and staff (all ages) associated with schools (K-12th grade) and children (age less than 6 months) and staff in child care centers.
- Pregnant women, children 6 months to 4 years of age, new parents and household contacts of children less than 6 months old.
- Non-elderly adults under 65 years old with medical conditions that increase the risk of complications of influenza.
- Health care workers and emergency services sector personnel.

## Symptoms

Symptoms of H1N1 flu include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Headache and body aches
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Sometimes also nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea

People experiencing such symptoms should stay home and avoid contact with other people. You may want to contact your health care provider to determine if treatment is needed.

Ill people who experience any of the following warning signs should seek emergency medical care.

**In children**, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- 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

**Parents should call their primary care provider (pediatrician or family physician) before coming to the emergency department.**

**In adults**, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

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