



Questions and Answers

What is novel H1N1 (swine flu)?

Novel H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This new virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. This virus is spreading from person-to-person worldwide, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) signaled that a pandemic of novel H1N1 flu was underway.

Prevention & Treatment

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against novel H1N1 virus. However, a novel H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and may be ready for the public in the fall. As always, a vaccine will be available to protect against seasonal influenza.

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

Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- 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.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.

What is the best way to keep from spreading the virus through coughing or sneezing?

If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)

Keep away from others as much as possible. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Put your used tissue in the waste basket. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

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CDC Recommendation

CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with swine influenza viruses.

Oseltamivir (brand name Tamiflu®) is approved to both treat and prevent influenza A and B virus infection in people one year of age and older.

Zanamivir (brand name Relenza®) is approved to treat influenza A and B virus infection in people 7 years and older and to prevent influenza A and B virus infection in people 5 years and older.

Recommendations for using antiviral drugs for treatment or prevention of swine influenza will change as we learn more about this new virus.

Clinicians should consider treating any person with confirmed or suspected swine influenza with an antiviral drug. Visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/recommendations.htm>.

Note: Much of the information in this document is based on studies and past experience with seasonal (human) influenza. CDC believes the information applies to novel H1N1 (swine) viruses as well, but studies on this virus are ongoing to learn more about its characteristics. This document will be updated as new information becomes available.

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Questions and Answers (cont.)

What is the best technique for washing my hands to avoid getting the flu?

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. Wash with soap and water or clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner*. CDC recommends that when you wash your



hands—with soap and warm water—that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you have severe illness or you are at high risk for flu complications, contact your health care provider or seek medical care. Your health care provider will determine whether flu testing or treatment is needed.

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

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

- 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

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
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Contamination & Cleaning

How long can influenza virus remain viable on objects (such as books and doorknobs)?

Studies have shown that influenza virus can survive on environmental surfaces and can infect a person for 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on the surface.

What kills influenza virus?

Influenza virus is destroyed by heat (167-212°F [75-100°C]). In addition, several chemical germicides, including chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, detergents (soap), iodophors (iodine-based antiseptics), and alcohols are effective against human influenza viruses if used in proper concentration for a sufficient length of time. For example, wipes or gels with alcohol in them can be used to clean hands. The gels should be rubbed into hands until they are dry.

What surfaces are most likely to be sources of contamination?

Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air. Germs can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk, for example, and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.

Vaccination Recommendations

CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has taken an important step in preparations for a voluntary novel H1N1 vaccination effort to counter a possibly severe upcoming flu season. CDC is concerned that the new H1N1 flu virus could result in a particularly severe flu season this year.

Vaccines are the best tool we have to prevent influenza. The seasonal flu vaccine is unlikely to provide protection against novel H1N1 influenza. **However a novel H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and may be ready for the public in the fall.** The novel H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine – it is intended to be used along-side seasonal flu vaccine.

CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), a panel made up of medical and public health experts, met July 29, 2009, to make recommendations on who should receive the new H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. The groups recommended to receive the novel H1N1 influenza vaccine include:

- Pregnant women;
- Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age;
- Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel;
- All people from 6 months through 24 years of age,
- Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.

Once the demand for vaccine for the prioritized groups has been met at the local level, programs and providers should also begin vaccinating everyone from the ages of 25 through 64 years.

IMPORTANT BULLETIN - HEALTHCARE PROVIDER PRE-REGISTRATION

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) will be coordinating the distribution of the novel H1N1 vaccine. The vaccine will not be distributed via the usual private sector channels but will be made available through DSHS only.

All healthcare providers in Texas who would like to vaccinate against this disease are encouraged to pre-register to receive vaccine. Pre-registration will continue throughout the H1N1 vaccination campaign. Please consider pre-registering by September 11th to assist DSHS with statewide planning. After you complete and submit this pre-registration, a page will appear with a Pre-Registration ID number. Please print this page and save this ID number for your records. You will need this ID number to make novel H1N1 vaccine orders in the future.

You only need to complete the pre-registration ONCE per site. However, if you have significant changes, you may complete a replacement pre-registration. To register go to the following link: <https://vaccineregistration.questionpro.com/>

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