

# Get the Facts About Novel H1N1 Influenza

Content Source:

U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

May 2009

# Novel H1N1 Influenza

Novel H1N1 (referred to as swine flu early on) is a new influenza virus that is spreading from person-to-person.

The United States government has declared a public health emergency in the U.S. in response to the H1N1 outbreak.

CDC's response goals are to:

- reduce transmission and illness severity
- provide information to help health care providers, public health officials, and the public address the challenges posed by this emergency.

# Novel H1N1 Influenza

- The first cases of human infection with novel H1N1 influenza virus were detected in April 2009 in San Diego and Imperial County, California and in Guadalupe County, Texas.
- The virus has spread rapidly.
- The virus is widespread in the United States at this time and has been detected internationally as well.

# Novel H1N1 Influenza

CDC expects that more cases, more hospitalizations, and more deaths from this outbreak will occur over the coming days and months.

- Influenza is always serious – each year in the United States, seasonal influenza results, on average, in an estimated 36,000 deaths and more than 200,000 hospitalizations from flu-related causes.
- This outbreak certainly poses the potential to be at least as serious as seasonal flu, if not more so, especially given the fact that there currently is no vaccine against this virus.
- Because this is a new virus, most people will not have immunity to it, and illness may be more severe and widespread as a result.

# Signs and symptoms

Symptoms of novel H1N1 flu in people are similar to those associated with seasonal flu.

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- In addition, vomiting (25%) and diarrhea (25%) have been reported. (Higher rate than for seasonal flu.)



# How does novel H1N1 Influenza spread?



- This virus is thought to spread the same way seasonal flu spreads
- Primarily through respiratory droplets
  - Coughing
  - Sneezing
  - Touching respiratory droplets on yourself, another person, or an object, then touching mucus membranes (e.g., mouth, nose, eyes) without washing hands

# Can you get novel H1N1 Influenza from eating pork?

No. The novel H1N1 influenza virus (formerly referred to as swine flu) virus is not spread by food.

You cannot get novel H1N1 flu from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

# What can you do to protect yourself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine right now to protect against this new H1N1 virus.

However, everyday actions can help prevent spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza.

# Take these everyday steps to protect your health

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Wash for 15 – 20 seconds.
- Alcohol-based hand wipes or gel sanitizers are also effective.



# 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.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Avoid contact with sick people.

## If you get sick...

- Stay home if you're sick for 7 days after your symptoms begin or until you've been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer.
- If you are sick, limit your contact with other people as much as possible.



# Watch for emergency warning signs

Most people should be able to recover at home, but watch for emergency warning signs that mean you should seek immediate medical care.

## In 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

# Emergency warning signs in children

If a child gets sick and experiences any of these warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In 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
- Irritable, the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough



# What is CDC doing?



- CDC has implemented its emergency response.
- CDC continues to issue new interim guidance for clinicians and public health professionals.
- CDC's Division of the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) has sent 25% of the SNS stockpile of antiviral drugs, personal protective equipment, and respiratory protection devices to all 50 states and U.S. territories to help them respond to the outbreak.

# What is CDC doing?

- CDC is working closely with state and local officials nationwide.
- CDC teams are deployed and many other activities and studies are underway or are being planned.
- CDC also is coordinating closely with the World Health Organization and other international partners.

# Summary

- CDC anticipates that there will be more cases, more hospitalizations and more deaths associated with this new virus in the coming days and weeks because the population has little to no immunity against it.
- We must all work together to limit and control the transmission of novel H1N1 influenza.

# Summary

- For the most current information on the H1N1 influenza outbreak, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
- CDC, WHO, and public health officials worldwide are carefully monitoring the situation.
- Follow all recommendations for preventing the spread of influenza.
- For local guidance, contact your state, local, or county health officials.

# Resources

- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/espanol/>
- 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
- <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>