

H1N1 (Swine) Flu: When to Call the Doctor

Swine influenza A (H1N1) is a viral infection. It can cause flu-like symptoms: fever, body aches, coughing, sore throat and tiredness. If you get sick, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) advises that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. Swine flu is thought to spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing.

When to call the doctor

Call your doctor right away if you:

- Have flu symptoms (even mild ones) and have been exposed to someone who has known H1N1 (swine) flu or you have traveled to areas where there are documented cases of H1N1 flu
- Are pregnant and have had close contact with someone who may have H1N1 flu, even if you have no symptoms
- Have flu symptoms and you are pregnant, elderly, have a chronic health condition or a weak immune system, or are caring for a baby or child who has flu symptoms

A person with these symptoms requires emergency medical care:

- Trouble breathing or fast breathing
- Chest pain or pressure
- Purple or bluish color of lips or skin
- Vomiting and unable to keep fluids down
- Any signs of dehydration, which include dizziness, decreased urine, or lack of tears when crying (in an infant)
- Seizures or convulsions
- Confusion or being less responsive than usual
- Was sick but had been getting better, then became worse again with fever or worsening cough

Before you go

It is critical to contact your doctor or health care provider and report your symptoms **before** you go to the clinic, hospital or office. That way, the doctor can make preparations to keep you isolated from others at the site of care if needed. Make sure you tell your provider if you have recently traveled to an area where the swine flu has been found or if you have come in contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with swine flu.

Based on your symptoms and exposure history, your doctor will decide whether you need testing or treatment for swine flu. The doctor can also suggest how to help you get better and prevent spreading the virus to others.