

Novel H1N1 (“Swine”) Influenza Fact Sheet

Novel H1N1 flu (“swine flu”) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people

This new virus has also been called “pandemic (H1N1) 2009.” First seen in Mexico, it was identified in the United States in April 2009. Much like the regular seasonal influenza viruses, this new flu strain causes a range of illnesses from mild to severe, and deaths have occurred.

The novel H1N1 virus is spread from person-to-person by direct contact or through droplets

The novel H1N1 virus is spread in the same way that seasonal flu spreads, mainly through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

Symptoms to look for:

The symptoms of novel H1N1 flu virus in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Chills
- Cough
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Stuffiness or runny nose

Symptoms may begin within 1 to 7 days (usually 1 to 4 days) after the person has been exposed.

Look Out for Emergency Warning Signs that require urgent medical attention:

In children:

- High or prolonged fever
- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids (dehydration)
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions
- Changes in mental status, such as not waking up or not interacting; or seizures

In adults:

- High or prolonged fever
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions
- Confusion

Some people are at higher risk for serious complications from the flu and should talk to their doctor if they develop flu-like symptoms, or think they may have been exposed to the flu

- Children younger than 5 years old
- Adults 65 years of age and older
- Pregnant women
- Persons younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities
- Persons with the following conditions:
 - Chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), renal, hepatic, hematological (including sickle cell disease), neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus)
 - Immunosuppression, including that caused by medications or by HIV

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. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- 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 for at least 24 hours after you are free of fever or feverishness without the use of fever-reducing medications. This is to keep from infecting others and spreading the virus further.