

What You Need to Know about H1N1*

What is H1N1 flu?

The H1N1 flu (swine flu) is a new strain of the flu virus. It affects a person's breathing system and is very contagious. It can spread quickly from person to person. H1N1 flu is not the same as the seasonal flu.

How does H1N1 flu spread?

Just like the seasonal flu, H1N1 flu is spread from person to person. People can get H1N1 flu from:

- Someone who has the flu who coughs or sneezes.
- Touching flu-infected things like a door knob, telephone, toy or elevator button.

How long can an infected person spread H1N1 virus?

People who have H1N1 flu or the seasonal flu are contagious. They can spread the flu virus to others starting one day before, and up to five to seven days after, the symptoms start.

What are some of the symptoms of H1N1 flu?

Just like the seasonal flu, the symptoms of H1N1 flu can range from mild to severe.

Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Body aches
- Cough
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Chills
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Fatigue (feeling very tired and not having energy)
- Diarrhea
- Throwing up

Who is at risk of H1N1 flu complications (other problems)?

Anyone can get the flu. Some groups of people are at a higher risk of having other serious problems (complications) from H1N1 flu.

- Children and young adults aged 6 months to 24 years
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic conditions
- Adults 65 and older (They are the least likely to get the H1N1 flu. But if they get it, they are at high risk of having other more serious problems.)
- People with weakened immune systems (such as those with HIV/AIDS)



H1N1 is a flu virus. Young people, pregnant women and those with chronic illness are at a higher risk of complications or other serious problems. You and your family can take steps to avoid the flu.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you have flu-like symptoms, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests you:

- Stay home and stay away from people to keep from making others sick. You need to stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of a fever-reducing drug.
- Avoid going out except to get medical care. This means not doing routine things such as going to work, school, or social and group events. Avoid shopping or traveling.
- Contact your doctor or get medical care if you:
 - Have severe illness.
 - Are at high risk of flu complications.

Your doctor will decide if you need flu testing or treatment.

What steps can I take to avoid the flu?

You can get both the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 flu vaccine, if you need them.

You should know that the vaccines are different for the seasonal and H1N1 flu. The seasonal flu vaccine is not expected to protect against H1N1 flu.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- 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 each time you cough or sneeze. The CDC suggests that you wash your hands with soap and warm water for 15 to 20 seconds.
- When you don't have access to soap and water, use alcohol-based hand wipes or gel sanitizers. If you use gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.
- Wipe shared items in the home with alcohol-based cleaners to kill flu germs.



Be Prepared

- Follow public health advice about school closures, staying away from crowds and public events.
- Be ready in case you get sick and need to stay home for a week or so. Keep a supply of over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, alcohol-based hand rubs, tissues and other related items. Having these at home will cut down the need to go out to shop while you are sick and contagious.

If you have more questions or concerns about H1N1 flu or seasonal flu, talk to your doctor or call MedCall to reach a registered nurse (RN). Also, visit <http://www.cdc.gov> or <http://www.flu.gov> for more information.

BlueChoice HealthPlan Medicaid

Customer Care Center: 1-866-781-5094

TTY line: 1-866-773-9634

MedCall: 1-866-577-9710

TTY line: 1-800-368-4424

www.bluechoicescmedicaid.com

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): **1-800-232-4636**

www.cdc.gov

TTY lines are only for members with hearing and speech loss.



Medicaid

Source:

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *Questions & Answers, 2009 H1N1 Flu ("Swine Flu") and You* (Accessed October 2009)

This information is meant to educate the reader. It is not meant to be medical advice. Please consult your doctor for advice on matters that may affect your health.

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