

## H1N1 Flu

### “Swine flu”

*This handout describes symptoms of H1N1 flu, how it is spread, how to control it, and what to do if you or someone you are caring for has it.*

### What is the H1N1 flu?

H1N1 is an illness caused by a *virus*. *Influenza* (flu) is an illness of the nose, throat, and lungs.

H1N1 flu is also called the “swine flu.” It is *not* spread from pigs to humans, and we cannot get it from eating pork.

Most of us have not built up *immunity* to the H1N1 flu. Immunity is the body’s ability to fight off an illness.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of H1N1 flu are fever, sore throat, cough, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue (feeling very tired and weak). Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting.

H1N1 flu can make a chronic illness, such as diabetes or asthma, worse. Deaths from pneumonia and respiratory failure have also occurred in people who get H1N1 flu.

But, most people who get H1N1 flu have only mild symptoms and recover within 1 week.

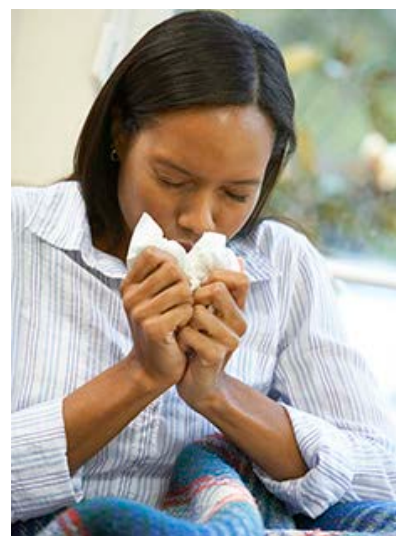
### How is it spread?

H1N1 flu is contagious. It spreads:

- Through the air when people who have it cough or sneeze.
- By touching surfaces someone who has it has coughed or sneezed on and then touching your hand to a part of your body where germs can enter, such as your mouth.

### Is there a vaccine for H1N1 flu?

An H1N1 vaccine is available. After getting the vaccine, it will take about 21 days to be protected from H1N1 flu.



*H1N1 flu spreads through the air when someone coughs or sneezes.*

The H1N1 vaccine does **not** protect against seasonal flu. If you normally get an annual flu shot, you should still get one.

## **Who is at risk of getting H1N1 flu?**

Anyone can get this flu, but some people are at higher risk of getting it. They may also have serious problems from the illness. We highly advise that you get the H1N1 vaccine if you:

- Are pregnant.
- Are between 6 months to 24 years old.
- Are 25 to 64 years old and have another health condition that may make you very ill if you get the flu. This includes people with asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and anyone with a weak immune system.
- Are a healthcare worker.
- Have contact with children under 6 months of age. This includes family members, caregivers, and others in the home.

## **What should I do if I get H1N1 flu?**

- Stay home from work, social activities, school, and public areas. Wait until your fever has been gone for 24 hours without taking fever-lowering medicine before you return to normal activities.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Or, cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow. Throw away used tissues.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often and always after you cough or sneeze. Or, use an alcohol-based gel.
- To keep from spreading the disease, wear a mask if you need to:
  - Be near other people at home
  - Leave your home while you are sick

## **Should I call the doctor if I think I or someone I am taking care of might have H1N1 flu?**

If symptoms are mild and you would not normally call the doctor about them, you do not need to call now. But, you should call if you or someone you are caring for has any of these symptoms:

- Chest pain or trouble breathing
- Illness that is getting worse quickly
- Severe sore throat that makes swallowing impossible
- Very severe cough
- Fever that lasts longer than 3 days
- Does not respond when spoken to or does not make eye contact

### **Questions?**

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

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