

2009 H1N1 Flu

(formerly Swine Flu)

What do I need to know and do?



2009 H1N1 Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by a new strain of influenza virus. In June 2009, H1N1 was declared a pandemic – meaning it is everywhere in the world.

Flu viruses spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing. Sometimes people may catch flu by touching something infected and then touching their mouth or nose. A vaccine for H1N1 flu is expected to be available in late fall 2009.

Who should get priority for the H1N1 vaccination?

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months
- Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel
- People between 6 months and 24 years old
- Adults ages 25 through 64 with chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems

Visit www.flu.nc.gov or call your local health department in the late fall to see if the new vaccine is available.

Are there medicines to treat H1N1 infection?

Yes. Antivirals are medicines that fight flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. Doctors may prescribe them as pills, liquids or in an inhaler and are usually only for people who are at highest risk for complications from the flu. Antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick, usually within two days of developing symptoms.

H1N1 FLU SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headache

SEEK EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE IF:

- 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
- In babies, bluish or gray skin color, lack of responsiveness or extreme irritation.

Seasonal flu vaccine is still important. Do not wait for the H1N1 vaccine to arrive; get your seasonal flu vaccine first!

TIPS TO PREVENT THE FLU

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- 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 upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with flu, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from making them sick.
- Get the recommended seasonal flu vaccine when it becomes available.
- Get the recommended H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available.

For more flu information, visit www.flu.nc.gov or call N.C. CARE-LINE, 1-800-662-7030 (TTY 1-877-452-2514).