

BASICS OF SWINE FLU AND CARING FOR SICK INDIVIDUALS

What is H1N1 (swine flu)?

H1N1 (swine flu) is a type of influenza (flu) virus that causes respiratory disease that can spread between people. Most people infected with this virus in the United States have had mild diseases, but some have had more severe illness, and there have been deaths, usually in people with underlying serious medical conditions.

Young children, pregnant women, and people with chronic diseases like asthma, diabetes, or heart disease, and people on immunosuppressant drugs or with HIV/AIDS may be at higher risk for complications from this infection.

What are the symptoms?

In most people, the symptoms of H1N1 (swine flu) are similar to the symptoms of regular flu. Flu is basically a respiratory illness and symptoms (in adults) will include:

- **Fever (>100° F)**
- **Cough**
- **Sore Throat**
- **Runny nose/nasal congestion**
- **Body/muscle aches**
- **Headache**
- **Chills and fatigue**
- **Occasionally vomiting and diarrhea**

How is H1N1 (swine flu) spread from person to person?

H1N1 (swine flu) spreads the same way as other flu viruses, through the coughing or sneezing of a sick person or when a person touches something contaminated with the virus and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

Is there a vaccine to prevent H1N1 (swine flu)? Vaccine candidates are being tested but are not expected to be available until sometime this fall at the earliest.

How to keep from spreading the H1N1 (swine flu): There are very simple, everyday things you can do to protect yourself and others from flu germs:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. (Long enough to sing Happy Birthday twice). Hand sanitizers can also be used.
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
- Stay at least six feet away from people who are sick.
- Sick people should stay home from school, daycare and stay away from other people until their fever and other symptoms have resolved for 24 hours.
- In communities where H1N1 (swine flu) has occurred, stay away from bars, shopping malls, movie theaters, or other places where there are large groups of people.

What to do if you, a family member, or a roommate is sick with flu-like symptoms:

- Unless you/they need medical attention, stay at home. Don't go to work or school or send children to daycare.
- Drink a lot of fluids (juice, water, Pedialyte, ® sports drinks like GatorAde®).
- Keep comfortable. Rest is important.
- For fever, sore throat, and muscle aches, you can use fever-reducing medicines that your doctor recommends (e.g. Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Aleve). Do not use aspirin with children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
- If someone in your home is sick, keep him or her away from those who are not sick.
- Keep tissues close to the sick person and have a trash bag within reach for disposing used tissues.
- Your health care provider may prescribe an antiviral drug to treat you if you become ill or to protect you or a family member who comes in contact with someone diagnosed with H1N1 (swine flu). The current H1N1 (swine flu) virus is sensitive to two antiviral drugs: Tamiflu® and Relenza®. That may change if the virus mutates.

When to seek emergency medical care: Most people can ride out the flu symptoms at home using the above self-care tips. If you experience signs, seek emergency medical care:

In Adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

For more information call 1-800-CDC INFO, or go the [Http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu).

For medical advice, call the Loyola University Health Center at 410-617-5055 or your health care provider.

After hours students may call Sinai at 410-583-9396 and a physician will return your call.