

Seasonal & H1N1 (Swine) Influenza (Flu)

What is influenza?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Every year in the United States, on average:

5% to 20% of the population gets the flu

More than 200,000 people are hospitalized for flu or its complications

About 36,000 people die from flu

How do people get influenza?

The most common way the flu viruses spread from person to person is through respiratory secretions that are produced when a contagious person coughs, sneezes or talks. A person without the flu can be infected by breathing in these wet drops or by touching something that was recently contaminated and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes.

Can I catch influenza from someone?

Yes, influenza is contagious. A person infected with flu can pass it to others during a specific time period - the infectious period. Usually people who have the flu can infect others 1 to 2 days before their symptoms start and up to 5 days or more after they become sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick

How can I protect myself and my family from getting sick with influenza?

The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccination each year. There are two types of vaccines:

The "flu-shot" - an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle. The flu shot is approved for use in people 6 months of age and older, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.

The nasal-spray flu vaccine - a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu (sometimes called LAIV for "Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine"). LAIV is approved for use in healthy people 2 years to 49 years of age who are not pregnant

Healthy habits can also limit the spread of flu.

Wash hands often. Cover your cough and sneeze Stay home when sick

Don't share personal items Get Vaccinated Clean and disinfect

What are the signs of influenza?

Fever (usually high) Headache Dry cough Muscle aches

Sore throat Runny or stuffy nose Extreme tiredness

Stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, also can occur but are more common in children than adults

Do I need to wear a mask?

Individuals who feel sick may be asked by their health care providers to wear a mask when coming to their offices. Health care providers should wear a mask when in close contact with a symptomatic patient.

Sherrow Prosser PHN

What is H1N1 swine flu?

H1N1 swine flu is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. It was first detected in people in April 2009 and has been declared a pandemic.

How does swine flu spread?

Just like seasonal flu, the H1N1 (swine) flu spreads through tiny wet drops produced when a contagious person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These drops can travel short distances. A person without the flu can be infected by breathing in these wet drops or by touching something that was recently contaminated and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes

When is an infected person contagious?

Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick. However, people are contagious before having symptoms.

How can I prevent the spread of H1N1 (swine) flu?

Healthy habits will help prevent the spread of germs:

Clean your hands often	Stay home when sick	Cover your cough and sneeze
Clean and disinfect	Don't share personal items	Get Vaccinated

Is there an H1N1 swine flu vaccine?

While it important for everyone to get a seasonal flu shot, this vaccination will not protect against the H1N1 swine flu virus. A 1-dose H1N1 swine flu vaccine will be available to the public at the end of October (approximate). The H1N1 swine flu vaccine is manufactured in the same way as seasonal flu vaccine. Groups encouraged to be vaccinated for H1N1 swine flu include:

Pregnant women, Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age
Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel, All people from 6 months through 24 years of age,
Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza

What are the symptoms of H1N1 (swine) flu?

The symptoms of swine flu are similar to those of our regular seasonal flu. They may include:
Fever, Cough, Sore throat, Body/muscle aches, Chills, Fatigue, Headache, Diarrhea, Vomiting

When sick with the flu what can I do to protect others?

Stay home and stay away from others. Separate yourself from people who are not sick. Stay home until at least 24 hours after the fever is gone. Do not entertain visitors. If possible, choose a room in your home away from others in your household (for example, a spare bedroom with bathroom). Choose one person in the household as your caregiver. If possible, the caregiver shouldn't be pregnant, over age 64, or have medical conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, or weakened immunity. Avoid contact with other household members.

Have everyone in the house use healthy habits:

Wash hands frequently with soap or water or use alcohol-based hand rub

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue (or shirt sleeve) when sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose

Don't share personal items like toothbrushes or drinks

Clean and disinfect frequently touched items and surfaces

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Is it a cold or the flu?

In general, the flu is worse than the common cold. Colds are usually milder than the flu.

Symptom	Flu	Cold
Fever	Usually 102 degrees F, but can go up to 104 degrees F and usually lasts 3 to 4 days.	Rare in adults and older children, but can be as high as 102 degrees F in infants and small children.
Headache	Sudden onset and can be severe	Rare
Muscle Aches	Usually, and often severe	None or mild
Tiredness and Weakness	Can last 2 or more weeks	Mild
Extreme Exhaustion	Sudden onset and can be severe	Never
Runny Nose	Sometimes	Often
Sneezing	Sometimes	Often
Sore Throat	Sometimes	Often
Cough	Usually, and can become severe	Mild to moderate

What if I get worse? When to contact a doctor?

Contact a doctor right away if you have:

- Difficulty breathing or very abnormal breathing (rapid, slow, with retractions, with grunting)
- Bluish lips, fingertips of skin
- Steady and/or severe chest pain
- Fever that improves while not on fever medicine, then comes back
- Very abnormal heart rate that persists over time
- Dramatic decrease in urine output
- Extreme tiredness or increasing irritability

When going to the doctor's office or the emergency room:

If possible, inform the staff ahead of time that you have the flu.
 After arrival, immediately inform the receptionist or triage nurse that you have the flu. If you call an ambulance, let the 911 operator know that you have the flu and also let the ambulance crew know when they arrive.
 Wear a face mask if you can. If not already wearing a mask, you may be asked to wear one.
 Sit away from others as much as possible.