

# Prevent the spread of H1N1 (Swine Flu)

Help protect yourself and your family by getting prepared for an influenza outbreak now. Prevent the spread of the virus by following these simple steps.

[www.wvdhhr.org](http://www.wvdhhr.org)



H1N1, or Swine Flu, is spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing. Touching something with the H1N1 virus on it and then touching your eyes, mouth or nose can also spread infection. Wash hands often with soap and warm water or clean with an alcohol-based cleaner. Cleaning frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs and telephones can also prevent the spread of the H1N1 virus.



**WASH HANDS FREQUENTLY**



**COUGH OR SNEEZE INTO YOUR  
ARM OR SLEEVE**



**AVOID TOUCHING EYES, MOUTH  
OR NOSE**



**IF YOU FEEL SICK STAY HOME**

## Managing H1N1 (Swine Flu) Illness

### Background

The novel H1N1 (Swine flu) virus is causing illness in the United States and around the world. Experts expect it to continue to spread. Much has been learned, but we continue to learn more every day.

### H1N1 Symptoms are Similar to Seasonal Flu

The symptoms of this new H1N1 (Swine flu) virus are similar to symptoms of seasonal flu – fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Sometimes, people also have diarrhea and vomiting. People are usually sick for up to a week, occasionally longer.



### Avoid Spreading Flu to Others

If you are sick with a flu-like illness, stay home for 7 days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. Stay apart from others as much as possible. You're most likely to spread flu to people who are within 3-6 feet of you. If sick and you have to be very close to others, wear a surgical mask if you can or cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer. People can probably spread the virus to others from one day before symptoms start to up to 7 days after they get sick. Children, especially young children, may be contagious a bit longer.

### Know Your Risk for Complications

Although more is being learned, people most at risk for serious complications from the new H1N1 (Swine flu) disease are likely the same as those at high risk for complications from seasonal flu: children younger than 5 years old, pregnant women, people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), people who are immunosuppressed, and people over age 65.

### Treatment is Similar to What You Should Do for Seasonal Flu



Most people are expected to recover without needing medical care.

**If you have flu-like illness and are at high risk for complications of flu check with your health care provider or seek medical care.**

**Things you can do to care for yourself at home include:**

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.

- Over the counter medications you would normally use for colds and flu can help treat the symptoms, for example, acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®) for fever; cough medicines or decongestants. Check the label to see if over the counter medicines already contain acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Don't double dose!
- Children less than 18 with flu should never be given aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) containing products, for aspirin can put them at risk for a complication called Reye's Syndrome.

**Antiviral drugs will not be needed for everyone who has H1N1 flu virus infection.**

- Antivirals [oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) and zanamivir (Relenza®)] are most important to use in those who require hospitalization for influenza or those at high risk of complications.
- While they do not cure flu, they can help reduce disease severity, duration, or complications.
- These medications must be prescribed by a health care professional.
- For treatment, the drugs work best if given within 2 days of becoming ill, but may be given later if illness is severe or a person is at high risk for complications.
- Sometimes, antivirals are also used to prevent disease in high risk, close contacts of cases.

**Be watchful for emergency warning signs that might indicate you need to seek medical attention.**

In children, those include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

In adults, emergency warning signs include:

- 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

**Find out More**

- Stay informed. Health officials will provide additional information as it becomes available.
- Visit the following websites for up to date guidance: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) (“Taking Care of a Sick Person” “Antivirals” and other Resources) or [www.wvdhhr.org](http://www.wvdhhr.org) for West Virginia specific information.
- Speak to your health care provider or local health department.
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds, and other social distancing measures.
- Consider developing a family emergency plan as a precaution for more serious pandemics or other emergencies. This includes plans for childcare should schools be closed, a supply of food and medicines if you are staying home for a few days, etc. See [www.wvflu.org](http://www.wvflu.org), “At Home”.



## Talking to Children About Novel H1N1 Flu Concerns

Stressful situations often cause children to worry and have many questions about what is happening and how it can be fixed. It is important to remember to take care of your health and well-being as well as the health of your children. Your confidence, calm attitude and ability to cope well with stressful situations will help your children ease their worries and feel safe and secure.

### Here are some helpful tips on what you can do for your children:

- ◆ Keep activities as consistent and normal as possible even if your normal routine changes (such as daycare or school closures).
- ◆ Ask your children what they have heard about novel H1N1 flu (swine flu). Answer questions openly and honestly at a level they can understand. Be concrete and do not avoid difficult questions.
- ◆ Allow your children to express their feelings and concerns. Let them know it is okay to be afraid or mad. Ask questions so you can help them identify and cope with their feelings.
- ◆ Children always need to feel safe and loved. When they are uncertain about situations and afraid, they may need even more affection and attention.
- ◆ Limit exposure to media and adult conversations about novel H1N1 flu. Try to be available to watch the television with your children and answer their questions.
- ◆ Encourage appropriate healthy behaviors, such as eating well, sleeping well, and playing outside.
- ◆ Use their questions as an opportunity to let them know what they can do to avoid getting novel H1N1 flu.

### Focus on what your child *can do* to avoid close contact with people who are sick with flu:

- ◆ Set a good example by **washing your hands frequently** with soap and water for 20 seconds (long enough for children to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice), and by **coughing and sneezing into a tissue** and disposing of it immediately.
- ◆ Stay at least six feet away from people who are sick with flu.
- ◆ Stay home from school and avoid extracurricular activities if sick.
- ◆ In communities where H1N1 (swine flu) virus is spreading, stay away from large gathering places or crowded settings if you are at high risk for complications of flu.

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#### **Additional Resources**

Key facts about Novel H1N1: [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/key\\_facts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/key_facts.htm)

Taking Care of Patients at Home: [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance\\_homecare.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm)

Talking to Children About Swine Flu (H1N1): A Parent Resource: [www.nasponline.org/resources/Talking\\_With\\_Children\\_About\\_Flu\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/Talking_With_Children_About_Flu_FINAL.pdf)

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources,  
Bureau for Public Health: [www.wvdhhr.org](http://www.wvdhhr.org)

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# Self-Mental Health Care

## Things to remember when trying to understand an outbreak or health concern

- ◆ It is normal to worry about yourself and your family's safety.
- ◆ Everyone is at risk during an outbreak.
- ◆ Grief and anger are normal reactions.
- ◆ Focusing on your strengths will help you cope.
- ◆ Everyone has different needs and different ways of coping.

## Common reactions that may occur during an outbreak or health concern

- ◆ Difficulty talking, sleeping, walking and concentrating.
- ◆ Increased irritability.
- ◆ Depression, sadness, mood swings, and crying easily.
- ◆ Feeling of helplessness.
- ◆ Concerns about those who depend on you for care.
- ◆ Worries about loss of income and job protection, especially if asked to stay at home for an extended period of time.
- ◆ Fears of separation from life activities.
- ◆ Feeling a lack of control, especially when control is entirely in the hands of others.
- ◆ Increased boredom.



## Take action

- ◆ Learn as much as you can about the H1N1 virus and be aware of the normal reactions during an outbreak.
- ◆ Keep to your usual routine as much as possible.
- ◆ Have activities on-hand that can prevent boredom (games, toys, etc.) and keep your mind active.
- ◆ Get plenty of sleep, try to exercise, eat healthy foods and relax.
- ◆ Establish a family emergency plan that includes important phone numbers and where to meet if you become separated.



## Pay special attention to children

- ◆ Let children know it is okay to feel upset when something scary happens.
- ◆ Enjoy your child and take part in activities together.
- ◆ Encourage children to express feelings without making judgment.
- ◆ Turn off the television and radio, especially if the news makes you worried. If you are worried, children can sense it.