

KNOW THE FACTS!

H1N1 (SWINE) FLU

H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This virus is spreading from person-to-person, in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. This is a respiratory illness; swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food or eating pork products.

Public health agencies are closely monitoring the H1N1 flu situation. This is a rapidly evolving situation and guidance could change. Everyone is encouraged to visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/ for detailed, up to date information.

WHAT CAN A PERSON DO TO PREVENT THIS ILLNESS?

There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illness like H1N1 flu. People should use this time to understand proper hygiene habits to stay healthy:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not near by, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If a tissue is not available, use the inside of your elbow to cover your cough or sneeze, **not your hands**.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. Try to stay 6 feet away from people who are coughing or sneezing.
- If you are sick, you should stay home until your fever is gone for at least 24 hours.
- Receive the H1N1 flu vaccine, when available. People at high-risk for illness such as pregnant women and all children older than 6 months should get vaccinated.

HOW CAN I PLAN AHEAD?

Prepare yourself and your family by creating a family emergency plan and keeping supplies on hand.

- Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home for a week or so; a supply of over-the-counter medicines, alcohol-based hand rubs, tissues and other related items could be useful and help avoid the need to make trips out in public while you are sick and contagious.
- If you are a parent, make plans for emergency child care in case your child is ill and unable to attend school.

IS THERE A VACCINE FOR H1N1 FLU?

Yes. Vaccines are the most powerful public health tool for control of flu, and the U.S. government is working closely with manufacturers to produce ample supplies of the H1N1 vaccine.

Hamilton County Public Health is working with schools, physicians and health centers to assure people have access to the vaccine.



PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

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H1N1 (SWINE) FLU (cont.)

WHEN WILL THE H1N1 FLU VACCINE BE AVAILABLE?

Local health districts in Ohio have begun to receive limited quantities of H1N1 vaccine. Because initial doses of H1N1 vaccine are limited, the intended use is for targeted vaccination clinics for certain high risk priority groups. Additional vaccine shipments are arriving weekly.

WILL THERE BE ENOUGH H1N1 VACCINE?

Vaccine availability is limited at first, therefore people at the highest risk for illness will be first priority to receive the H1N1 vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified high-risk groups that are a priority to receive the H1N1 vaccination.

If H1N1 flu becomes more prevalent and there is enough H1N1 flu vaccine for everyone, local health departments may decide to open Points of Dispensing (PODs) in addition to encouraging individuals to get the vaccine through their normal flu shot provider. A POD is a recognizable location in the community where medications or vaccines can be distributed.

WHO SHOULD GET THE VACCINE?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified several priority groups that are recommended to receive the H1N1 vaccination first:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- Health care and emergency services personnel who have direct patient contact
- Persons between the ages of 6 months through 24 years of age
- People ages 25 through 64 years with chronic health disorders or weakened immune systems

IS THE VACCINE MANDATORY?

No, getting vaccinated against H1N1 is not mandatory. However, immunizations are one of the most effective ways to prevent serious illness in children and adults. Pediatric immunization programs in the United States have been quite successful in reducing the number of children affected by highly contagious diseases including measles, rubella, mumps and polio.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF H1N1 FLU?

Symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu:

- Fever
- Cough
- Headache and body aches
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Sometimes also nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

People experiencing such symptoms should stay home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever and avoid contact with other people.

DO I NEED TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL?

It is important that people experiencing severe flu-like symptoms seek prompt medical care. Most people have had mild illness from flu and do not need treatment.

In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- 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
- Fever with a rash

Parents should call their primary care provider (pediatrician or family physician) before going to the emergency department.

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

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



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