

Influenza H1N1...What You Need to Know!

What is Influenza H1N1?

North American Human Influenza A (H1N1) is caused by influenza viruses that normally infect pigs. The virus causing the current influenza outbreak is not a swine flu virus, but a combination of human, swine and bird viruses. The flu virus causing the current outbreak, now called Influenza A (H1N1)/North America/Human, has adapted itself to be easily transmitted from person-to-person.

What are the symptoms of Influenza H1N1?

The symptoms of the flu virus in this outbreak are similar to normal seasonal influenza. Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, headache, and muscle aches. Some people have also reported runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Severe illnesses and death has occurred as a result of illness associated with this virus

How severe is illness associated with 2009 H1N1 flu virus?

Illness with the new H1N1 virus has ranged from mild to severe. While most people who have been sick have recovered without needing medical treatment, hospitalizations and deaths from infection with this virus have occurred.

How does the Influenza H1N1 virus spread?

Spread of 2009 H1N1 virus is thought to occur in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something – such as a surface or object – with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

How quickly will symptoms start if you have the Influenza H1N1?

Symptoms usually appear about 2-7 days after exposure.

How long can an infected person spread this virus to others?

People infected with seasonal and 2009 H1N1 flu shed the virus and may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after. This can be longer in some people, especially children and people with weakened immune systems.

Prevention & Treatment

Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. Then immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, **CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone** except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.
- **Other important actions that you can take are:**
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.
- Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home for a week or so by: having a supply of over-the-counter medicines, alcohol-based hand rubs (for when soap and water are not available), tissues and other related items could help you to avoid the need to make trips out in public while you are sick and contagious.