

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST THE FLU

FLU IS A CONTAGIOUS DISEASE

The flu (influenza), a serious contagious disease, is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs caused by influenza viruses. Flu viruses cause illness, hospital stays and deaths in the United States each year.

The H1N1 flu is a new and very different influenza virus that is spreading worldwide. This new virus was called “swine flu” at first because it has pieces of flu viruses found in pigs in the past. However, the H1N1 virus has not been detected in U.S. pigs.

This flu season, the new virus may cause a lot more people to get sick than during a regular flu season. It also may cause more hospital stays and deaths than seasonal flu.

SPREADING INFECTION TO OTHERS

People infected with seasonal or H1N1 flu 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 and in people infected with H1N1 flu.

SYMPTOMS FOR SEASONAL/H1N1 FLUS ARE SIMILAR

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Dry cough
- Extreme tiredness
- Muscle aches
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sometimes diarrhea
- Vomiting

PRACTICAL WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THE FLU

- Get a seasonal flu vaccine and H1N1 vaccine (when it is available).
- Wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into your elbow. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
 - If you are sick with flu-like symptoms, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, except to get medical care or for other necessities.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

If you have severe illness or you are at high risk for flu complications, contact your health care provider or seek medical care.

In children, warning signs that need urgent medical attention 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 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
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK

If you live in areas where H1N1 or seasonal flu cases have been identified and you become ill with influenza-like symptoms, you may want to contact your health care provider. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.

If you are sick, stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.

IF YOU ARE PREGNANT

- All pregnant women are urged to receive the seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccines.
- All pregnant women should immediately report symptoms of flu or close exposure to people with the flu to their physician.
- All pregnant women should use frequent hand washing and avoid contact with sick individuals.
- If a family member has flu-like symptoms, pregnant women should try and arrange for another person to care for those who are sick.

H1N1 AND FEEDING YOUR BABY

- Take everyday precautions such as washing your hands with plain soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand rub before feeding your baby.
- If you develop flu-like symptoms, ask for help from someone who is not sick to feed and care for your baby.
- You do not have to stop breastfeeding if you have the flu. Because moms make antibodies to fight diseases they come in contact with, their milk is custom-made to fight the diseases their babies are exposed to as well.
- Moms who are breastfeeding and taking medicine to treat flu because they are sick should express their breast milk for bottle feedings, which can be given to your baby by someone who is not sick.
- If your baby is sick, it is OK to continue breastfeeding. Sick babies need more fluids than when they are well. The fluid babies get from breast milk is better than anything else because it also helps protect your baby's immune system.





CLEAN HANDS STOP THE SPREAD OF INFECTION

The best way to stop the spread of infection is to wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds. When water is not available, use alcohol-based products like sanitizers.

Wash your hands:

- Before preparing and eating food
- After going to the bathroom
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has gone to the bathroom
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- After handling uncooked foods, particularly raw meat, poultry or fish
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After handling an animal or animal waste
- After handling garbage
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After handling items contaminated by flood water or sewage
- When your hands are visibly dirty

MEDICATIONS/VACCINATIONS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the use of oseltamivir (Tamiflu®), or zanamivir (Relenza®) for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with H1N1. If you get sick, antiviral drugs may be prescribed by your physician.

Antiviral drugs work best if started within the first 2 days of symptoms, and may be especially important for people who are very sick or hospitalized, or people who are sick with the flu and who are at increased risk of serious flu complications, such as pregnant women, young children and those with chronic health conditions.

Henry Ford Health System recommends an annual seasonal flu vaccine as the most important step in protecting against seasonal flu.

- Vaccination is especially important for people at high risk of serious flu complications, including young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease, and people 65 years and older.
- Seasonal flu vaccine is important for health care workers and other people who live with or care for high-risk people to prevent giving the flu to those at high risk.
- A seasonal flu vaccine will not protect you against the H1N1 flu.
- An H1N1 vaccine will be available soon as an option for preventing H1N1 flu.
- People at greatest risk for H1N1 flu are pregnant women, children, and people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease.

GETTING VACCINATED

Henry Ford Health System recommends that its employees and patients receive the seasonal flu and H1N1 vaccines when they become available.

- A single injection of seasonal flu vaccine is given.
- The H1N1 vaccine may require two injections about 30 days apart.
- The seasonal and H1N1 vaccines may be given at the same time.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is recommending the following groups receive the H1N1 vaccine:

- Pregnant women.
- Caregivers of children younger than 6 months of age.
- Health care workers and Emergency Medical Service personnel.
- People 6 months to 24 years of age.
- People aged 25 to 64 who have a health condition associated with a higher risk of medical complications from the flu.



HOUSEHOLD CLEANING TIPS

When providing care to a household member who is sick with the flu, the most important ways to protect yourself and others who are not sick are:

- Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by the sick person in the trash. Wash your hands after touching used tissues and similar waste.
- Keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.
- Linens, eating utensils, and dishes belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately. However, these items should not be shared without washing thoroughly first.
- Wash linens (such as bed sheets and towels) by using household laundry soap and tumble dry on a hot setting. Avoid “hugging” laundry prior to washing it to prevent contaminating yourself. Clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub right after handling dirty laundry.
- Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with water and soap.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

In the event of a major flu outbreak, Corporate Public Relations will activate emergency hotlines for patients and employees to call and hear important information. These hotlines are only intended to disseminate information by recorded outgoing messages, they do not accept incoming messages.

Patient Hotline: (313) 916-8322

Employee Hotline: (313) 916-8431

Web sites

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu

Michigan Department of Community Health

<http://www.michigan.gov/flu/>

World Health Organization (WHO)

<http://www.who.int/en/>

Employees should visit henry.fhfs.org under Clinical for the latest H1N1 and seasonal flu updates.

Patients should visit HenryFord.com for the latest H1N1 and seasonal flu updates.