



H1N1 Prevention and Protection

What is H1N1 flu?

H1N1 is a respiratory virus that was first diagnosed in March 2009. The virus spreads from person to person when someone who is infected with the virus coughs or sneezes into the air. H1N1 was originally called “swine flu,” because it was thought to be a strain of flu that pigs often have.

How can I avoid getting sick or infecting others?

- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve or a tissue, away from others.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap.
- When and where soap and water are unavailable, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers in gathering areas, such as reception desks and conference rooms.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Use disinfecting wipes on community telephones, computers, etc.
- If you have flu symptoms, stay home from work or school for at least 24 hours “fever free” (without the use of fever-reducing medication), and contact your health-care provider.
- Get a flu shot if it is indicated for you.

Are there drugs to treat H1N1?

The CDC expects to have an H1N1 vaccine prepared for fall 2009. Two anti-viral drugs, Tamiflu © and Relenza ©, have shown some effectiveness in treating people with H1N1 flu. Discuss treatment options with your health-care provider.

Who should get vaccinated?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have indicated the following priority groups for H1N1 vaccinations, expected to be available beginning in fall 2009:

- **Women who are pregnant**, because they are at higher risk for complications and immunization may provide protection to infants too young to be vaccinated;
- **Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age** because younger infants are at higher risk of influenza-related complications and cannot be vaccinated. Vaccinating people in close contact with infants may help protect infants by “cocooning” them from the virus;
- **Health-care and emergency medical services personnel** because infections among health-care workers have been reported and this can be a potential source of infection for vulnerable patients. Also, increased absenteeism in this population could reduce health-care system capacity;
- **Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions** associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.
- **Children from 6 months through 18 years of age** because there have been many cases of H1N1 influenza in children and they are in close contact with each other in school and daycare settings, which increases the likelihood of disease spread; and
- **Young adults 19 through 24 years of age** because many cases of H1N1 influenza have occurred in healthy young adults who often live, work, and study in close proximity to one another.