



SERVING UP FOOD SAFETY

From: The State Food
Protection Management Office
<http://foodsafety.tamu.edu>

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H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) and You

What is 2009 H1N1 (swine flu)? It is a new influenza virus causing illness in people and it was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. It is spreading from person to person worldwide, much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization signaled that a pandemic of 2009 H1N1 flu was underway.

Why is H1N1 sometimes called "swine flu"? It was originally referred to as "swine flu" because laboratory testing showed that many of the genes in this new virus were very similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs (swine) in North America. Further studies showed that this flu virus has two genes from flu viruses that normally circulate in pigs and Bird (avian) genes and human genes.

Are people getting sick from the H1N1 and how are they getting it? Yes, people are getting sick, but the good news is most people who have become ill with this new virus have recovered without requiring medical treatment. The virus is spread from human to human and spreads in the same way that seasonal flu spreads mainly 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, eyes, or nose.

How long can the virus remain viable on objects? Studies have shown that the virus can survive on surfaces and can infect a person for 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on the surface.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>



H1N1 – Signs, Symptoms, and Severity

What kills the virus? Heat of 267°-212°F destroys the virus. In addition, several chemical germicides, including chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, detergents, and iodine based antiseptic and alcohols are effective against human influenza viruses if used in proper concentration for a sufficient length of time.

What are the signs and symptoms of this virus Individuals will experience fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people who have been infected with the virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Illnesses associated with the new H1N1 virus have ranged from mild to severe. Studies show about 70% of the people who have been hospitalized with the H1N1 virus have had one or more medical conditions previously recognizing them as high risk of serious seasonal flu related complications. This includes pregnancy, diabetes, heart disease, asthma, and kidney disease. H1N1 appears to be different from seasonal influenza in that adults older than 64 years do not yet appear to be at increased risk of H1N1 complications thus far. CDC studies have shown that no children and very few adults younger than 60 years old have existing antibody to the H1N1 virus; however, about one third of adults older than 60 may have antibodies against this virus.

How long can an infected person spread this virus to others? Individuals infected with seasonal and 2009 H1N1 flu shed virus and may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

H1N1-Prevention and Treatment

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick? There is no vaccine available right now to protect against H1N1 virus. Vaccines should be available in mid-October.

Take these steps everyday to protect your health:

- *Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- *Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- *Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- *Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- *If you are sick with flu-like illness, the CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever reducing medicine. Keep away from others to avoid spreading the flu.
- *Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home for a week with a supply of over the counter medicines, antibacterial tissues and other items such as food, so you do not need to go out.

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H1N1 Warning Signs

If you do get sick and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care:

Children . . .

- *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

Adults . . .

- *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 return with fever and worse cough



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