

General Information about H1N1 (Swine Flu)

The H1N1 Flu is transmitted through coming in contact with respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This could occur if someone sneezes or coughs in the air or when a person touches the respiratory droplets on another person or object, then touches their own nose or mouth.

Symptoms of H1N1 are similar to the regular flu and may include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Body Aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Difficulty breathing (young children)
- Low activity (young children)

People who are sick with H1N1 should:

- Check with their health care provider about any special care they might need if they are pregnant or have a chronic medical condition, such as diabetes, asthma, etc.
- Check with their health care provider to see if they should take antiviral medications.
- Stay home for 7 days after the start of illness and fever is gone.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink clear fluids to keep hydrated.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Wash hands with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand rub, after using tissues, coughing, or sneezing into hands.
- Avoid close contact with others. Do not go to school or work while ill.
- Be watchful of emergency signs that might indicate when you need to seek medical attention.

In case you are taking care of someone who is sick with the H1N1, you should some necessary precautions:

- Keep the sick person away from other people as much as possible, possibly in a spare bedroom with its own bathroom.
- Remind sick person to cover coughs and sneezes, throw out tissues and wash hands with soap and water regularly (especially after coughing or sneezing).
- Have everyone in the house wash hands regularly with soap and water
- Disinfect areas where the sick person is staying, including the bathroom, bedside tables, toys for children, etc.
- Use paper towels to dry hands after washing them.

- Spend the least amount of time possible in close contact with a sick person and try to wear a facemask (for example, surgical mask) or N95 disposable respirator when you have to be in contact. These may be purchased at a pharmacy, building store or hardware store.
- Avoid re-using disposable facemasks and N95 respirators if possible.
- Caregivers should wear a mask when they leave home to keep from spreading flu to others in case they are in the early stages of infection themselves.
- Pregnant women should avoid caring for sick persons.
- Avoid carrying the soiled linens of sick persons to prevent getting your self sick. Clean hands with soap and water after handling dirty laundry.
- Wash towels, sheets and blankets by using household laundry soap and tumble dry on hot setting.
- Wash eating utensils and glasses in a dishwasher or by hand with water and soap.

Someone who is sick with H1N1 should seek medical attention right away if they have any of the following:

- Difficulty breathing or chest pain;
- Purple or blue discoloration; of the lips;
- Vomiting and unable to keep liquids down;
- Shows signs of dehydration, such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination, or in infants, lack of tears when they cry;
- Has seizures (for example, uncontrolled convulsions);
- Is less responsive than normal or becomes confused, or in young children, not waking up easily from naps or not interacting;
- In young children, being so irritable they do not want to be held;
- In young children, symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough.

(Source: CDC, "Interim Guidance for H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu): Taking Care of a Sick Person in Your Home" and "H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu): Information for Concerned Parents and Caregivers")