

H1N1 Flu Facts

Protect Your Health:

- *Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. Throw tissue in the trash after you use it.*
- *Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.*
- *Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.*
- *Try to avoid close contact with sick people.*
- *If you get sick, stay home at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.*
- *Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds, and other social distancing measures.*

What is H1N1 Flu?

H1N1 is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This virus 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 study showed that this virus has genes from pigs, birds (avian) and human genes. Scientists call this a “quadruple reassortant” virus.

The H1N1 virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009 and is spread person-to-person in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza is spread. Human infections are ongoing in the United States. While most people who have become ill with this new virus have recovered without requiring medical treatment; hospitalizations and deaths have occurred.

Flu viruses are spread mainly from person-to-

person through coughing or sneezing by an infected person. 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.



People with high risk medical conditions appear to have an increased risk of complications from this virus. These underlying conditions include asthma, diabetes, suppressed immune systems, heart disease, kidney disease, neurocognitive and neuromuscular disorders and pregnancy.

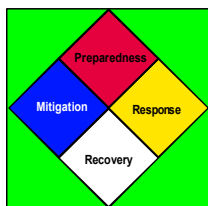
Limit Exposure

Studies have shown that influenza virus can survive on environmental surfaces for 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on the surface. The virus is destroyed by heat (167°-212°). Several germicides and alcohols are effective also if used in proper concentration for a sufficient length of time. For example, wipes or gels with alcohol in them can be used to clean hands; the gels should be rubbed into hands until they are dry. Wiping down doorknobs and other common surfaces with an antiseptic solution can drastically reduce the infection potential.

Use caution when caring for an individual who is sick. Linens, eating utensils and dishes belonging to the infected individual should be



cleaned separately. Linens (such as bed sheets and towels) should be washed using household laundry soap and tumbled dry on a hot setting. Eating utensils should be washed in a dishwasher or by hand with soap and hot water.



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Prepare for H1N1 (Swine Flu)

In Your Community:



As you prepare for the current H1N1 flu, remember:

- *It may be difficult to get medical care.*
- *Supplies and services may be limited.*
- *You may be asked to stay away from others.*
- *Medicines for flu symptoms may be in short supply.*
- *Travel may be difficult.*
- *The pandemic may last a long time.*



Talk to your doctor about:

- *Getting your seasonal flu shot. (It won't be effective against H1N1 but may help you stay healthy during flu season.)*
- *Information regarding the H1N1 vaccine and when it is available in your community.*

Know your neighbors:

- Talk with family, friends, and neighbors to make sure everyone is prepared.

Know school policies:

- For more school information, visit the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Web site at: www.k12.wa.us/healthservices/h1n1flu.aspx

At Work:

- **Be ready** for the possibility that you may not be able to go to work.
- **Know your workplace's policies** concerning sick leave, absences and telecommuting.
- **Encourage planning.** Every business, organization and agency should have a plan for making sure essential work will get done if large numbers of employees are absent over many months.
- **Explore ways to get your work done** that reduce personal contact. For example, increase use of e-mails or phone conferences.

At Home:

Make household and family emergency plans:

- Decide who will take care of children if schools are closed.
- Think about how you would care for people in your family who have disabilities if support services are not available.
- Be prepared to get by for at least a week on what you have at home.

Keep these items in your home:

- Enough food and water per person for a week or more.
- Medications — At least a week's supply of those you take regularly.
- Items to relieve flu symptoms — medicines such as Ibuprofen and Acetaminophen for fever, cold packs, blankets, extra water and fruit juice.
- Items for personal comfort — soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and toilet paper.

Learn more...

Washington State Department of Health — www.doh.wa.gov/h1n1

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services — www.flu.gov

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

World Health Organization (WHO) — www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu

Local public health agencies in Washington State — www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap
