



H1N1 Influenza: Just the Facts, Please

What is H1N1 (swine) flu?

H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This new virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. Other countries, including Mexico and Canada, have reported people sick with this new virus. This virus is spreading from person-to-person, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread.

How does this virus spread?

Spread of the H1N1 virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 flu and how long should I stay home?

The symptoms of H1N1 (swine) flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include **fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue**. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with H1N1 flu virus.

You should stay home **for at least 24 hours** after your fever is gone (without the use of fever reducing medications).

What is the incubation period and how long are people contagious?

The incubation period can be from 1-3 days. You can be contagious before symptoms develop. Virus is spread through droplets up to 3 feet. The flu virus is heavy so does not remain in the air long after someone coughs or sneezes.

What can I do to keep from getting sick?

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your 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 with influenza, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Why did the CDC stop reporting individual confirmed and probable novel H1N1 flu cases?

The case counts of novel H1N1 flu that were reported and updated weekly on the CDC website were based on reports of laboratory confirmed cases of influenza submitted by states. However, the number of cases of novel H1N1 flu infection continues to increase and **most cases, particularly those that do not**