



**require hospitalization or those who do not seek medical care, are not tested.** Therefore, the number of reported cases that are lab confirmed is a gross underestimation of the total number of illnesses.

Thus, on July 24, 2009 CDC transitioned from reporting probable and confirmed case counts to only reporting regional disease activity levels using its seasonal surveillance systems to track the progress of the novel H1N1 flu outbreak. This form of reporting disease activity levels is the method CDC uses to report on routine seasonal flu activity, which does not count individual cases, but instead monitors activity levels and virus characteristics through nine nationwide surveillance systems. Results from these systems are updated weekly and are posted on the CDC website on Fridays at [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu).

### **How long can influenza virus remain viable on objects (such as books and doorknobs)?**

Studies have shown that influenza virus can survive on environmental surfaces and can infect a person for 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on the surface.

### **What kills influenza virus?**

Influenza virus is destroyed by heat (167-212°F [75-100°C]). In addition, several chemical germicides, including chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, detergents (soap), iodophors (iodine-based antiseptics), and alcohols are effective against human influenza viruses 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.

### **What surfaces are most likely to be sources of contamination?**

Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air. Germs can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk, for example, and then touches their own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.