

H1N1 flu



Public Health
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I think I have the flu. Now what?

Public Information Web Site: www.flu.gov

How do I know if someone has the H1N1 or seasonal flu?

It is very hard to tell if someone who is sick has 2009 H1N1 flu or seasonal flu. Public health officials and medical authorities will not be recommending laboratory tests to find out which flu a person has.

Symptoms of flu include fever or chills and cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

Anyone who has the symptoms of flu-like illness should stay home and not go to work or school.

What should I do if I get sick with flu-like symptoms?

If you live in areas where people have been identified with new H1N1 flu and become ill with flu-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people, except to seek medical care. If you have severe illness or you are at high risk for flu complications, contact your health care provider or seek medical care. Your health care provider will determine whether flu testing or treatment is needed.

How long can a sick person spread H1N1 flu to others?

In the current flu conditions, people with symptoms of flu should stay home for at least 24 hours *after* they no longer have fever or do not feel feverish, without using fever-reducing drugs. If the flu conditions become more severe, CDC recommends that a sick person stay home for 7 days. A person who is still sick after 7 days should stay home until 24 hours after the symptoms have gone away. In addition, this longer period should be used in health care settings and in any place where a high number of high-risk people may be exposed, such as childcare facilities for children less than 5 years of age.

How does H1N1 flu spread?

Spread of H1N1 flu primarily occurs through contact with a person with H1N1 flu. Human-to-human spread of H1N1 flu occurs in the same way as seasonal flu, through coughing or sneezing of infected people.

What about anti-viral medications?

Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. This fall, antivirals may be prioritized for persons with severe illness or those at higher risk for flu complications.

During the spring H1N1 outbreak, the Administration released supplies of anti-virals to all the states. We have since replenished the stockpile and have been working closely with manufacturers to prepare for a potential increased demand this fall.