

# What you need to know about the flu



## Basic Flu Facts

- There are many different influenza viruses. H1N1 is one type of influenza virus.
- Flu symptoms include:
  - Fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue.
  - Some people, especially children, have diarrhea and vomiting.
- Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people who are already infected with the influenza virus.
- People may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.
- Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick.
- Influenza is a virus and does not need antibiotics. Your doctor will decide if you need medication.

**\* This is for general information. If you have specific questions about your condition, call your medical provider.**

## Is It a Cold or the Flu?

The flu is worse than the common cold. With the flu, symptoms such as fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, and dry cough are more common and intense. Colds are usually milder than the flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose.

Symptom	Flu	Cold	Allergy
Fever	Usually 102 F, but may go as high as 104, and usually lasts 3-4 days	Rare in adults and older children, but can be as high as 102 F, in infants and small children	Never
Headache	Sudden onset and can be severe	Rare	Rare
Muscle aches	Usually, and often severe	None or mild	None
Extreme exhaustion	Sudden onset and can be severe	Never	Never
Runny nose	Sometimes	Often	Often
Sneezing	Sometimes	Often	Often
Sore throat	Sometimes	Often	Sometimes
Cough	Usually, and can be severe	Mild to moderate	Mild to moderate

## If You are Sick or Think You May Have the Flu—What You Should Do?

- **People who are mildly sick should;**
  - Stay home
  - Drink plenty of fluids
  - Treat symptoms with over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin).
- People with mild disease do not need to see the doctor or get H1N1 Flu testing.
- People with flu symptoms should remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100° F [37.8°C]).
- **Seek medical care if you have:**
  - **Difficulty breathing**
  - **Dehydration from vomiting and diarrhea**
  - **A fever that remains >101° F (38.3°C) after taking acetaminophen or Ibuprofen**
  - **Severely ill**
  - **If you are pregnant, have a child under age 5, or have a chronic disease**
- Please call the doctor's office before going there, so that they can make arrangements for your arrival.
- As a courtesy to others, if you are sick you should wash your hands frequently and consider wearing a surgical mask to help avoid spreading your flu viruses to other people.

## How to Protect Yourself

- Frequent hand washing will help kill the flu virus. Wash your hands frequently for 20 seconds with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethyl alcohol.
- There is currently no need to avoid general public gatherings, public transit or school, or for healthy persons to wear masks.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - Stay 6 feet away from someone who is coughing or sneezing.
  - Since viruses can live up to 24 hours or longer, clean surfaces such as counters, tables, and door handles.

## Who Should Get Vaccinated?

Vaccination is the best protection against the flu, and it is recommended for everyone. You will need two vaccines to be fully protected this year—one for the seasonal flu and one for the H1N1 flu. Contact your health care provider to find out availability.

## What Groups Will Receive Priority for H1N1 Vaccination?

The H1N1 vaccine will be available in a limited supply in early October. The following groups should get the vaccine as soon as it becomes available because they are at higher risk of complications, they are more likely to come in contact with the H1N1 virus, and they could possibly infect infants:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- Health care and emergency medical services personnel
- Persons between the ages of 6 months through 24 years of age
- Adults who have of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems (asthma, diabetes, HIV, etc.)

**Swine Flu Hotline: 1-888-865-0564 or 650-573-3927 (M-F 8:00AM-5:00PM)**