



For Facemask and Respirator Use to Reduce Spread of Novel H1N1 Flu in Community Settings INTERIM GUIDANCE

Information on how effective use of facemasks and respirators to reduce the spread of novel H1N1 (swine) flu in community settings is extremely limited. Without clear scientific data, interim recommendations have been developed on the basis of public health judgment, historical use of facemasks and respirators in other settings to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, and current information about novel H1N1.

In general, use of facemasks and respirators generally are not recommended in non-healthcare settings. However, there are certain situations where a facemask or respirator may be considered, especially for persons at high risk for severe illness from flu. *See recommendations below, which assume cases of novel H1N1 flu in the community.*

SETTING	NOT AT HIGH RISK for Severe Illness from Flu	AT HIGH RISK* for Severe Illness from Flu
HOME		
Caregiver to person with influenza-like illness (ILI) **	Facemask/respirator NOT recommended.	Try not to be the caregiver. If need to be, use facemask or respirator.
Others in the home	Facemask/respirator NOT recommended.	Facemask/respirator NOT recommended.
COMMUNITY (places of mass gathering like schools, camps, shopping malls, public transportation)		
Not crowded setting in the community	Facemask/respirator NOT recommended.	Facemask/respirator NOT recommended.
Crowded setting in the community	Facemask/respirator NOT recommended.	Avoid setting. If cannot be avoided, consider facemask or respirator.
NON-HEALTHCARE WORK SETTING		
Cases of novel H1N1 flu in the community	Facemask/respirator NOT recommended; may be considered in certain situations. See below.	Facemask/respirator NOT recommended; may be considered in certain situations. See below.
<p>For specific work activities involving contact with people who have ILI such as escorting a person with ILI, interviewing a person with ILI, providing assistance to a person with ILI, the following is recommended.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to maintain a distance of 6 feet or more from the person with ILI. • Keep interactions with the person with ILI as brief as possible. • Ask person with ILI to follow good cough etiquette and hand hygiene and to wear a facemask, if able, and one is available. • If at high risk of severe illness from flu, avoid people with ILI, if possible (e.g., by temporary reassignment at work). If close contact with persons with ILI cannot be avoided, some workers may choose to wear a facemask or N95 respirator on a voluntary basis. 		

* People at high risk for severe illness from flu: Children under 5. Pregnant women. Older adults over 65. People with diabetes, asthma (or other lung diseases), heart, liver or kidney diseases. Children under 18 on long term aspirin therapy. People with conditions that weaken their immune systems such as cancer or HIV.

** ILI is defined as fever (temperature of 100°F [37.8 °C] or greater) and a cough and/or a sore throat in the absence of a KNOWN cause other than influenza.

More information on facemasks and respirator use can be found at: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/masks.htm.