



Seasonal and Novel H1N1 (Swine) Flu

FACT SHEET

What is flu?

Flu, short for influenza, is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. Seasonal and novel H1N1 flu are both viruses that can cause mild to severe illness. Flu usually comes on suddenly.

How does flu spread?

Seasonal and Novel H1N1 (swine) flu viruses spread:

- from person to person through coughing or sneezing of a sick person; or
- when a person touches something that is contaminated with the virus and then touches his/her eyes, nose or mouth.

What is the concern about novel H1N1 flu?

While both seasonal and novel H1N1 flu are viruses that cause illness in people, the novel H1N1 virus is NEW which means that we do not have natural immunity (or protection). Unlike seasonal flu, novel H1N1 flu is affecting more people under the age of 25.

Will I be able to tell if I have seasonal flu or novel H1N1 flu?

No, you will not be able to tell if you have seasonal flu or novel H1N1 flu because the symptoms of seasonal and novel H1N1 flu are similar. Common symptoms include fever and cough or sore throat. Other symptoms are headache, extreme tiredness, runny/stuffy nose aches, as well as vomiting and diarrhea which are more common in children.

How can I protect myself and my family from seasonal or novel H1N1 flu?

- Get vaccinated for seasonal flu. Everyone is encouraged to get a seasonal flu shot as soon as possible.
- Plan to get the novel H1N1 flu vaccine, if you or a family member are included in one of the groups recommended to receive the vaccine. See the table on page 2 for current recommended groups. This information may change based on the amount of vaccine available.
- Take everyday actions to prevent and control the spread of flu germs.
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - Cover mouth and nose with a tissue, elbow or upper arm when coughing or sneezing.
 - Wash hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand rub when unable to wash hands. Help children wash their hands.
- Lessen the spread of germs in the home by taking everyday actions to prevent and control the spread of flu germs, keeping sick person(s) away from others, and cleaning household items and disposing of waste properly. (See the CCDPH Fact Sheet: Lessen the Spread of Germs in the Home.)

What is the difference between the vaccines for seasonal and novel H1N1 flu?

	Seasonal Flu Vaccine	Novel H1N1 Flu Vaccine
Priority people who should get each vaccine	<p>EVERYONE, with emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children 6 months – 18 years and adults 50 years and older • Pregnant women • Persons living with or caring for infants or older adults • Healthcare personnel • Persons w/ chronic medical conditions or weakened immune systems • Persons < 18 years of age on long-term aspirin therapy • Persons in long-term care facilities or nursing homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnant women • Persons living or caring for infants less than 6 months • Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel • Persons 6 months – 24 years • Persons 25 – 64 years with chronic medical conditions
Where to go for vaccine in suburban Cook County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare provider / doctor • Grocery Stores / Pharmacy chains (if 14 years or older) • Community Flu Clinics 	Check with your healthcare provider / doctor or CCDPH to find out if you or a family member should get the vaccine and where to go.

What do I or a family member do if sick with flu?

If sick with a fever (100°F or more) PLUS a cough, sore throat, OR runny/stuffy nose AND

IF YOU ARE:	YOU SHOULD:
<u>Not at high risk</u> for severe illness from flu	<p><u>STAY HOME</u> until fever-free without medicine for 24 hours.</p> <p>Warning! If taking care of a sick child or teenager, do NOT give aspirin because this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.</p>
<u>High risk</u> for severe illness from flu*	<u>CALL A DOCTOR</u> to find out if you or the family member needs medicine.
<u>Anybody having severe symptoms</u> like difficulty breathing	<u>GO TO THE HOSPITAL</u> right away. If you call 911, say you may have severe flu.

* 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.

Are there medicines to treat flu?

Yes. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. Talk to your healthcare provider about treatment for the flu.