



Flu Prevention

Novel Influenza A (H1N1) / Swine Flu and Seasonal Flu Fact Sheet

What is Novel Influenza A (H1N1)?

Novel H1N1 (swine flu) is a new influenza (flu) virus that was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. The new virus is spreading from person-to-person worldwide, probably in much the same way that regular *seasonal flu* viruses spread. On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that a pandemic of novel H1N1 flu was underway.

How do H1N1 and other flu viruses spread?

Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with flu. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something – such as a surface or object – with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

What are the signs and symptoms of the flu virus?

The symptoms of flu virus include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Many people who have been infected with the H1N1 virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Severe illnesses and death have occurred as a result of illness associated with influenza viruses.

What can you do?

To reduce the risk of spreading or becoming infected with any type of flu virus:

- Stay home when you're sick to avoid spreading illness. If you have influenza-like illness—fever plus cough and/or sore throat-- stay home at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever, or signs of fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and properly dispose of used tissues.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to get rid of most germs. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay healthy by eating a balanced diet, drinking plenty of water, and getting adequate rest and exercise.



What should you do if you get sick?

If you get sick with fever and a cough or sore throat, and are worried about your symptoms, contact

For more information: Imperial County Public Health Department

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your health-care provider. Your health-care provider will determine whether flu testing or treatment is needed.

In children, emergency warning signs that require urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults, emergency warning signs that need medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Can I get vaccinated against the flu?

Anyone interested in getting protection against seasonal flu should receive a flu shot at a flu vaccination clinic or with their healthcare provider. The seasonal flu vaccine protects against a variety of flu strains. Those who are considered high risk are highly encouraged to receive the seasonal flu shot as soon as it becomes available. Exact dates of when the H1N1 vaccine will be available to the public have not yet been announced. As more information is received on the availability of the H1N1 vaccine, it will be shared with the public.

What is the Public Health Department doing?

The Imperial County Public Health Department is hosting a number of vaccination clinics in Imperial County in the fall in addition to providing information on flu prevention to local school, clinics and the public. The Public Health Department conducts year-round monitoring of influenza-like illness at sentinel clinic sites in the county. A surveillance system is also in place at both local hospitals to monitor severe influenza-like illness among hospitalized patients. This provides health-care providers with up-to-date information about the type of viruses that are circulating in our community to assist with treatment decisions.