

FACT SHEET: Novel H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)

Public health officials in the US and world-wide are investigating outbreaks of Novel H1N1 flu (swine flu).

What is Novel H1N1 flu (swine flu)?

Novel H1N1 flu—formerly called “swine flu”—is a respiratory disease caused by a new type A influenza (flu) virus. The Novel H1N1 strain of flu virus can spread from human to human and can cause illness. This flu outbreak is ongoing and more cases are expected to occur.



What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against H1N1 flu. Take these everyday steps to help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza.

To protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 flu?

The symptoms of H1N1 flu in people are much like symptoms of seasonal flu and may include:

- Fever (greater than 100°F or 37.8°C)
- Cough
- Headache and body aches
- Sore throat
- Stuffy nose
- Fatigue
- Chills

Some severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with H1N1 flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 flu may cause a worsening of existing medical conditions.

What should I do if I have flu like symptoms?

If you live in areas or have recently traveled to areas where there have been H1N1 flu cases, and you become ill with the flu-like symptoms listed above, you should contact your health care provider, particularly if you are worried about the symptoms. Your health care provider will let you know if you need flu testing or treatment.

If you have the flu, avoid spreading your illness to others. Stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible for at least 7 days, or 24 hours after your symptoms go away.

Can people get H1N1 flu from cooking or eating pork?

You cannot get H1N1 flu from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products are safe.

For up-to-date information on Novel H1N1 flu:

NC Department of Health and Human Services' Care-Line: 1-800-662-7030 (English/Spanish)
1-877-452-2514 (TTY)

North Carolina Public Health website: <http://ncpublichealth.com>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu>

Guidance on developing a family plan: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/individual/index.html>

