

Shaw University

Student Health Center

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What is H1N1 (swine) flu?

H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This new virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. Other countries, including Mexico and Canada, have reported people sick with this new virus. This virus is spreading from person-to-person, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread.

What are the signs and symptoms of H1N1 (swine) flu in people?

The symptoms of H1N1 (swine) flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with H1N1 (swine) flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with H1N1 (swine) flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 (swine) flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

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

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Is this H1N1 (swine) flu virus contagious?

CDC has determined that this virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, it not known how easily the virus spreads between people.

Interim Recommendations:

- CDC is not currently recommending that institutions cancel or dismiss classes or other large gatherings.
- If confirmed cases of novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection or a large number of cases of influenza like illness (ILI) (i.e. fever with either cough or sore throat) occur among students, faculty, or staff or in the community, institutions officials should consult with state and local health officials regarding an appropriate response.
- Because the spread of novel influenza A (H1N1) within a health professions school may pose special concerns, school administrators are strongly encouraged to contact their state and local public health authorities if they suspect that cases of ILI are present on their campuses.
- Students, faculty or staff who live either on or off campus and who have ILI should self-isolate (i.e., stay away from others) in their dorm room or home for 7 days after the onset of illness or at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved, whichever is longer.
- If possible, persons with ILI who wish to seek medical care should contact their health care provider or campus health services to report illness by telephone or other remote means before seeking care. Institutions should assure that all students, faculty and staff receive messages about what they should do if they become ill with ILI, including reporting ILI to health services.
- If persons with ILI must leave their home or dorm room (for example, to seek medical care or other necessities) they should cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. A surgical loose-fitting mask can be helpful for persons who have access to these, but a tissue or other covering is appropriate as well. (See Interim Guidance for H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu): Taking Care of a Sick Person in Your Home).
- Roommates, household members, or those caring for an ill person should follow guidance developed for caring for sick persons at home. (See Interim Guidance for H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu): Taking Care of a Sick Person in Your Home).
- Persons who are at high risk of complications from novel influenza A (H1N1) infection (for example, persons with certain chronic medical conditions, children less than 5 years, persons 65 years or older, and pregnant women) should consider their risk of exposure to novel influenza if they attend public gatherings in communities where novel influenza A virus is circulating. In communities with several reported cases of novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection, persons who are at risk of complications from influenza should consider staying away from public gatherings.
- **Background**
- This document provides interim guidance to institutions on suggested means to reduce the spread of the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus in their communities. These recommendations are based on the recognition of sustained human to human transmission of this new virus, which has spread across much of the United States, and information that suggests most cases of illness from this virus are similar in severity to seasonal influenza. However, recommendations may need to be revised as more information becomes available.
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