

Novel H1N1 Influenza Fact Sheet

What is novel H1N1 Influenza?

Novel H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This virus was originally referred to as “swine flu” because laboratory testing showed that many of the genes in this new virus were very similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs in North America. Further study has shown that this new virus is very different from what normally circulates in North American pigs. It has two genes from flu viruses that normally circulate in pigs in Europe and Asia, avian genes and human genes.

Can humans become infected with H1N1 influenza?

Yes, cases of human infection with novel H1N1 influenza virus has been reported in all 50 states and many countries around the world.

How is H1N1 influenza spread?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has determined that novel H1N1 virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. The spread of novel H1N1 virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. People may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. However, at this time, it is not known how easily the virus spreads between people.

Can humans become infected with H1N1 influenza from eating pork?

No, the H1N1 virus does not spread through the consumption of food. Eating properly cooked pork is safe.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 influenza?

The symptoms of novel H1N1 flu virus in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include:

- fever
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- fatigue
- chills
- headache
- body aches

A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

How can I prevent getting or spreading the novel H1N1 influenza?

- 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. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with people who have flu-like symptoms. Stay home if you are sick for 7 days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. This is to keep from infecting others and spreading the virus further.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you have influenza-like symptoms, including those mentioned above you should stay home and avoid contact with other people. This means avoiding normal activities, including work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings. If you have severe illness or you are at high risk for flu complications, contact your health care provider or seek medical care.

For more information: Watch your local news station, call 2-1-1 or visit <http://www.elpasotexas.gov/health/>



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