

University of New Orleans: Student Health Services

H1N1 Flu Advisory (swine)

August 20, 2009

The H1N1 flu emergency continues and cases are increasing. Research continues on known and suspected cases and further advisories will be forthcoming. UNO continues to monitor the situation and will advise accordingly.

The World Health Organization has issued a **Level 6 Influenza Pandemic alert**. The Louisiana Office of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are currently investigating more possible cases.

Phase 6 (global pandemic) means that there are now ongoing community-level outbreaks in multiple parts of world. The WHO's decision to raise the pandemic alert level to Phase 6 is a reflection of the spread of the virus, not the severity of illness caused by the virus.

Louisiana cases as of 8/17/09: 449 confirmed cases, 1 death.

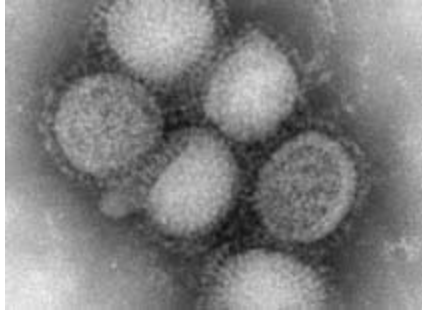
There are steps you can take to protect yourself and others. Normal flu prevention strategies are recommended:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

FAQ's

What is novel H1N1 (swine flu)?

Novel 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. This virus is spreading from person-to-person worldwide, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. On June 11, 2009, the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) signaled that a pandemic of novel H1N1 flu was underway.



Why is novel H1N1 virus sometimes called “swine flu”?

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 (swine) in North America. But 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 and bird (avian) genes and human genes. Scientists call this a "quadruple reassortant" virus.

Is this 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.

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

The symptoms of H1N1 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 swine flu.** In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine H1N1 flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions. If you have severe illness or you are at high risk for flu complications, contact your health care provider or seek medical care. Your health care provider will determine whether flu testing or treatment is needed.

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

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

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- 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

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

How does H1N1 virus spread?

Spread of novel H1N1 virus is thought to occur 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.

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.

How long can an infected person spread this virus to others?

People infected with seasonal and novel H1N1 flu shed virus and may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5 to 7 days after. This can be longer in some people, especially children and people with weakened immune systems and in people infected with the new H1N1 virus.

Novel H1N1 Vaccine

Every flu season has the potential to cause a lot of illness, doctor's visits, hospitalizations and deaths. CDC is concerned that the new H1N1 flu virus could result in a particularly severe flu season this year. Vaccines are the best tool we have to prevent influenza. The seasonal flu vaccine is unlikely to provide protection against novel H1N1 influenza. However **a novel H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and may be ready for the public in the fall.** The novel H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine – it is intended to be used along-side seasonal flu vaccine.

The groups recommended to receive the novel H1N1 influenza vaccine include:

- **Pregnant women** because they are at higher risk of complications and can potentially provide protection to infants who cannot be vaccinated;
- **Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age** because younger infants are at higher risk of influenza-related complications and cannot be vaccinated. Vaccination of those in close contact with infants less than 6 months old might help protect infants by “cocooning” them from the virus;
- **Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel** because infections among healthcare workers have been reported and this can be a potential source of infection for vulnerable patients. Also, increased absenteeism in this population could reduce healthcare system capacity;
- **All people from 6 months through 24 years of age**
 - **Children from 6 months through 18 years of age** because we have seen many cases of novel H1N1 influenza in children and they are in close contact with each other in school and day care settings, which increases the likelihood of disease spread, and
 - **Young adults 19 through 24 years of age** because we have seen many cases of novel H1N1 influenza in these healthy young adults and they often live, work, and study in close proximity, and they are a frequently mobile population; and,
- **Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.**

CDC does not expect that there will be a shortage of novel H1N1 vaccine, but flu vaccine availability and demand can be unpredictable and there is some possibility that initially, the vaccine will be available in limited quantities. CDC has made recommendations regarding which people within the groups listed above should be prioritized if the vaccine is initially available in extremely limited quantities. For more information see the CDC press release [CDC Advisors Make Recommendations for Use of Vaccine Against Novel H1N1](#).

More information on this topic can be obtained at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu>

www.hhs.gov

<http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/?id=249>

http://www.acha.org/info_resources/swineflu_2009.cfm

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Health Education

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