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# All You Need to Know about H1N1 Flu

## Your Questions Answered

A new kind of flu caused by the influenza A (H1N1) virus has recently emerged. Human cases of the H1N1 flu and associated deaths have been identified in both the United States and internationally.

### What is H1N1?

H1N1 is a respiratory disease that causes a regular outbreak in pigs. Humans do not normally get H1N1, yet infections can occur, and have now been reported and spread from person to person.

### Is H1N1 Contagious?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has determined that H1N1 is contagious in humans. In fact, sick individuals may be able to infect others beginning one day before their symptoms develop and up to seven days or more after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know that you are sick, as well as while you are still battling the virus.

### Can You Get H1N1 from Eating Pork?

Absolutely not. But, as you probably know, you need to cook pork thoroughly to avoid getting other diseases that can

be spread by undercooked meat.

### Are there Medications to Treat H1N1?

There are two medications available, and are most effective when they are used within two days of showing symptoms.

### What Can You do to Protect Yourself Against H1N1?

A vaccine was recently approved by the FDA and will be available for distribution in October. In addition, there are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing or coughing. Throw the tissue away after using it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after sneezing and coughing. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are ill.

- If you do become sick with H1N1, stay home from work or school and limit your contact with others to keep from infecting them.

### What Should You Do if You Get Sick?

If you live in areas where H1N1 has been identified and you become ill with influenza-like symptoms – fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea and vomiting or diarrhea – contact your healthcare provider immediately. He/she will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is necessary.

For more information on H1N1, visit [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu) or call (800) 232-4636.



### If You are Taking a Trip...

to an area where H1N1 cases have been reported, pay close attention to announcements from the local government, follow all local public health guidelines and wash your hands often with soap and water.



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## H1N1 Vaccine

### *Everything you need to know*



Novel H1N1 (commonly referred to as swine flu) is still a threat this flu season, but scientists have worked hard to develop a vaccine. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has recently approved this vaccine and government officials expect it to become available by mid-October.

#### **How is it Spread?**

Novel H1N1 is spread in the same way as seasonal flu, from person to person, generally through coughing or sneezing. A person can also become infected by touching a surface with flu viruses on it and then touching his/her nose or mouth.

#### **Symptoms**

The symptoms of H1N1 flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, chills, fatigue, diarrhea and vomiting. Though most infected people have recovered without medical treatment, some hospitalizations and deaths have occurred.

Watch for these warning signs that require emergency medical care:

- *Children:* fast breathing; bluish or gray skin color; severe or

persistent vomiting; not waking up or interacting; severe irritability; flu-like symptoms improve but then return.

- *Adults:* difficulty breathing; pain or pressure in chest or abdomen; sudden dizziness; confusion; severe or persistent vomiting; flu-like symptoms improve but then return.

#### **Vaccination**

The H1N1 vaccine was approved by the FDA, and Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced that she expects the vaccine to become available mid-October (with very limited supplies available earlier that month). Though experts had previously predicted the necessity for two H1N1 vaccination shots, clinical trials are now showing that the vaccine protects with only one dose for adults. It is likely that children under 10 will still need two shots, though.

However, this is in addition to the

normal seasonal flu shot, so adults will need two separate shots to protect against both seasonal and novel H1N1 flu (children under 10 will need three total shots).

#### **Vaccine Availability**

It is projected that there will be limited quantities of the vaccine initially (though officials expect that eventually there will be enough vaccine available for everyone who wants it). Therefore, the Centers for Disease Control's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends these priority groups for receiving the vaccination first:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than six months old
- Health care and emergency medical services personnel
- Persons between six months and 24 years old
- Persons ages 25-64 who are at higher risk for novel H1N1 due to chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems

#### **Did you know...?**

People above the age of 65 seem to have some immunity to the novel H1N1 flu virus, with current studies indicating that the risk of infection among persons age 65 and older is less than the risk for younger age groups.