

A New Virus Emerges Novel influenza A (H1N1) is a flu virus of swine (pig) origin that first caused illness in Mexico and the United States in March and April, 2009. It's thought that the swine flu spreads in the air the same way that the regular seasonal influenza viruses spread-through the coughs and sneezes of those sick with the virus. It may also be spread by touching infected objects then touching your nose or mouth.



Symptoms Symptoms of the swine flu are similar to those of the seasonal flu virus. Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny/stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some individuals have reported episodes of nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea and vomiting. Symptoms may last for a week or

longer. Those infected should stay at home and avoid travel, work, and school while fever and symptoms are present. Patients should wear face masks if they leave their homes to seek medical care. It is important to remember to cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading illness. Just as with the seasonal flu, people may be contagious from one day before they develop symptoms to up to 7 days after they get sick. People are usually no longer contagious after 24 hours without a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine). Most people recover without needing medical care. People at higher risk of serious complications from seasonal flu include people age 65 years and older, children younger than 5 years old, pregnant women, people of any age with chronic medical conditions (like asthma, diabetes, heart disease), and those who poor immunity status (HIV).

Vaccination Vaccines are the best tool we have to prevent the swine flu. The seasonal flu vaccine is unlikely to provide protection against H1N1 (swine flu) influenza virus. However *a novel H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and may be ready for the public in the fall of 2009*. The swine flu vaccine is not going to replace the seasonal flu vaccine; it's intended to be used with the seasonal flu vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control's recommendations for who should receive the H1N1 vaccine are as follows:

Pregnant women have a higher risk of complications and vaccination may provide protection to infants who cannot be vaccinated

Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months old Young infants have a higher risk of flu-related complications and can't receive the vaccine. Vaccination of those in close contact with infants less than 6 months old may protect infants by "cocooning" them from the virus

Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel Infections among healthcare workers can be a possible source of infection for vulnerable patients.

Children from 6 months - 18 years of age Children are in constant close contact in school and daycare settings-this increases the chance of disease spread

Young adults 19 - 24 years of age Young adults often live, work, and study in close proximity, and they are a frequently mobile population

Persons aged 25 - 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.

Studies indicate the risk for swine flu among those aged 65 or older are less than those for younger age groups. However, once vaccine demand among younger age groups has been met, programs and providers should offer vaccination to people 65 or older.

Treatment The drugs that are used for treating novel H1N1 flu are called oseltamivir (trade name Tamiflu ®) and zanamivir (Relenza ®). These antiviral drugs may become in short supply as the flu spreads. Therefore, the drugs may be given first to those people who have been hospitalized or are at high risk of severe illness from flu. The drugs work best if given within 2 days of becoming ill, but may be given later if illness is severe or for those at a high risk for complications.

Do you know your ABC's? ...for skin cancer?



Asymmetry: Is the lesion larger on one side than the other?

Border: Irregular is suspicious, smooth is normal

Color: is there variance in the color of the spot?

Diameter: is the lesion growing or changing at all? Anything bigger than a pencil eraser needs to be checked.

6 Daily Habits Making You Sick

1. **Using a Sponge**— sponges are the single most dirty item in your kitchen. They carry millions of bacteria and other microbes and each time you wipe your countertops, you're spreading those germs. Dip your sponge in bleach on a daily basis or microwave it to kill the bacteria.
2. **Vacuuming**— this daily activity may clean up your floors, but if you don't have a HEPA filter on your vacuum cleaner, you are just spreading tiny dust particles which filter thru the holes in the bag.
3. **Sleeping with pillows and mattresses**— the average person sheds about 1.5 million skin cells per hour and sweats 1 quart every day while doing nothing. Dust mites gather in our bedding and mattresses and can cause asthma and allergy problems to worsen. Use allergen covers to protect your bedding.
4. **Grilling meat**— cancer causing compounds are created in that black char that is formed on your meat while grilling. Using tin foil on the grill will limit the accumulation of these compounds.
5. **Opening windows**— We love to do this every spring to get some fresh air. The combination of seasonal allergens and poor air quality in many of our cities contribute to breathing problems and allergies.
6. **Watching TV**— we all do it, but this national pastime causes weight gain, which is a precursor to other health problems like diabetes and heart disease. Get out and exercise!

Zostavax—The Shingles Vaccine

Shingles or Herpes Zoster is a viral infection caused by the chicken pox virus. Symptoms include pain and rash along one nerve on one side of the body. The face and chest are most commonly affected. The pain is described as a burning or tingling discomfort and can occur along the entire length of the nerve. The rash is blister-like with a red base and occurs only on one side of the body. The pain and discomfort from shingles can last anywhere from a few weeks to a few months.

There is now a vaccine to boost your immunity against Herpes Zoster. Anyone age 60 or older can get the vaccine, whether they've had shingles or not. If you have never had the chicken pox, Varivax, a vaccine for chicken pox is recommended.