

H1N1 Influenza (*Swine Flu*) FAQ's

Question

Answer

How can I prevent getting H1N1 flu?

Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Try to avoid close contact with sick people. The Center for Disease Control states " the best way to prevent getting H1N1 flu is to get vaccinated."

What should I do if I get sick?

You should stay home and avoid contact with other people. Staying at home means that you should not leave your home except to seek medical care. Avoid 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, see your doctor. If you become ill contact your doctor right away.

How should I care for a family member at home?

- Keep the sick person away from other people as much as possible.
- Remind the sick person to cover their coughs, and clean their hands with soap and water often.
- Have everyone in the household clean their hands often, using soap and water. Children may need reminders or help keeping their hands clean
- Ask your health care provider if household contacts of the sick person should take antiviral medications such as oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) or zanamivir (Relenza®) to prevent the flu
- If you are in a high-risk group for complications from influenza, you should attempt to avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with household members who are sick with influenza. If close contact with a sick individual is unavoidable, consider wearing a facemask or respirator, if available and tolerable. Sick family members should not care for infants.

When should I see a doctor?

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, see your doctor.

In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention may 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
- Symptoms improve but return with fever and worse cough

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

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

Should I get a H1N1 flu test?

H1N1 tests are available but the test results are not sensitive. A negative test result does not guarantee that you don't have H1N1. False positive can also occur so the value of testing is limited at this time.

When is it important to take antiviral medication to treat H1N1?

H1N1 swine flu is sensitive to the antiviral drugs oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza), but because the virus could become treatment resistant if these drugs are overused, treatment is generally limited to people at high risk of complications. You're considered high risk if you:

- Are hospitalized
- Have shortness of breath along with other flu symptoms
- Are younger than 2 years of age
- Are 65 years and older
- Are pregnant
- Are younger than 19 years of age and are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.
- Have certain chronic medical or immunosuppressive conditions.