



**Central Michigan District Health Department**  
***“Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities”***

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## **H1N1 INFLUENZA**

### **General Public Fact Sheet**

#### **What is H1N1 Influenza A?**

- There are many types of influenza viruses. Influenza viruses change often. Novel H1N1 (earlier referred to as “swine flu”) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people.
- It is a respiratory disease caused by type A influenza virus. Outbreaks of influenza happen regularly around the world and cause varying levels of illness.
- This new virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009.
- On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) signaled that a pandemic of H1N1 flu was underway.

#### **Human Infections**

- Vaccines for human seasonal flu are not believed to provide protection from the currently circulating H1N1 Influenza A virus.
- Illness with the new H1N1 virus has ranged from mild to severe. Most people who have become ill with this new virus have recovered without requiring medical treatment.

#### **How Does H1N1 Influenza A Spread?**

- Spread of 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.
- Infected people may be able to infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to seven or more days after becoming sick.
- Young children might be able to infect another person for longer periods.

#### **Staying Healthy**

- Most important: **WASH YOUR HANDS!**
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try not to touch surfaces that may have the flu viruses on them.

## **Avoid Contact with Sick People**

- If you get sick, it is recommended that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications.

## **Vaccination Strategy to Control Influenza**

- All children are encouraged to receive the seasonal influenza vaccine as soon as it is available.
- It is anticipated that local health departments will be receiving a shipment of the H1N1 vaccine in mid-October.
- The CDC's recommendations for the target groups who should receive the vaccine include:
  - Pregnant women
  - People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months
  - Health care and emergency services personnel
  - All people 6 months through 24 years of age
  - People ages 24 through 64 years with certain health conditions
- If vaccine is available, the health department is planning to offer school-located vaccination clinics – clinics may not occur in all school districts/buildings.
- The immunization will be given at the school locations to those children who have a signed parental consent.
- Vaccinations will also be available at area doctors' offices and at the local health departments.
- All students are encouraged to receive the H1N1 vaccine.

## **H1N1 Influenza A Symptoms**

- High fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Headache/Chills
- Fatigue
- Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

## **Are Medicines Available to Treat H1N1 Influenza A?**

- Yes. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body.
- If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications.
- For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick – within 2 days of the start of symptoms.
- At this time, CDC recommends the use of Tamiflu or Relenza for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with H1N1 Influenza A viruses.