



H1N1 Novel Influenza Virus (Swine Flu)

What is the H1N1 novel influenza virus (swine flu)?

H1N1 novel influenza virus, originally referred to as swine influenza, causes the “flu”; it is a respiratory illness caused by a type A influenza virus. Like all influenza viruses, there are many types. Infected humans are now spreading it to others throughout the world.

You may hear or see the H1N1 novel influenza virus referred to as: H1N1, H1N1 novel flu virus; H1N1 flu, swine flu; swine influenza A infection; influenza A of swine origin or even swine-origin influenza A virus (S-OIV). These are all names for the same virus. Many people just call it “swine flu”.

How do humans catch this type of flu?

Not many people live close to pigs, so people do not typically catch the H1N1 novel influenza virus. However, the virus can spread from a pig to a human. A person living or working close to an infected pig, such as in a pig barn or workers in the swine industry, may pick up the virus.

Now that humans have become infected with the H1N1 virus, it is being spread from one person to another throughout the US and the world. People spread the virus to other people through coughing and sneezing or by shaking someone’s hand that has flu virus on it. Then when you touch your nose or mouth you catch the virus, just as with seasonal flu viruses.

Can I catch the H1N1 novel influenza virus from eating pork?

No. The virus is **not** spread by eating any kind of food.

But as with any meat, pork should be properly handled and thoroughly cooked. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of at least 160 °F kills any bacteria and viruses.

How do you prevent the spread of the H1N1 novel influenza virus?

Like seasonal flu, it is important for people to follow good hygiene practices.

Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and then throw the tissue away in a waste container.

Cough into your bended elbow or a sleeve if you do not have a tissue.

Keep your hands clean. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash your hands well with soap and warm water, often.

If you are sick, stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

What are the symptoms of the H1N1 novel influenza virus in humans?

The symptoms are similar to those of seasonal influenza. They include: fever, feeling tired, lack of appetite and coughing. Some people with the H1N1 virus have reported a runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Persons with these symptoms should consider seeing their health care provider.

Are there any medicines to prevent or treat the H1N1 novel influenza virus in humans?

Testing for a newly developed vaccine for the H1N1 virus is underway and may be available as early as October, 2009. In the meantime, there are medicines that can be used to treat someone who is infected with the virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend the use of Tamiflu (oseltamirvir) and Relenza (zanamirvir). A person must have a prescription to purchase either of these medicines.

For more information about the H1N1 novel influenza virus, visit our website at www.guilfordhealth.org or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu