



## H1N1-Prevention & Protection

It is influenza (flu) season in North Carolina and this year, we have an additional type of influenza virus circulating, the H1N1 novel influenza virus, also known as swine flu.

Persons with flu-like symptoms such as cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, and fever of 100 degrees or greater, even diarrhea or vomiting, likely have one of the flu virus types.

According to the CDC, it is expected that, as with the seasonal flu virus, most persons will recover from H1N1 infection without needing medical care.

### Vaccination

A vaccination specifically to protect individuals from the H1N1 novel flu virus is available. The CDC is recommending that persons in the groups listed below get the vaccine, because they are at higher risk for complications:

- pregnant women,
- people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age,
- health care and emergency services personnel,
- people ages 6 months through 24 years, and
- people ages 25 through 64 years who are at higher risk for novel H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

Children ages 9 and younger will need two doses of the vaccine. Persons age 10 and older will only need one dose. No cost for the vaccine has been set. The H1N1 flu vaccine does not replace the seasonal flu vaccine. It is important for individuals to get the seasonal flu vaccine. The seasonal flu vaccine and H1N1 vaccine can be taken at the same time, if necessary.

### What I become ill with flu?

If you are experiencing flu-like symptoms, especially fever, it is possible for you to spread the flu virus to those who have close contact with you (for example, someone living with or caring for you). To help prevent spread of the flu virus to others in close contact with you, please follow these guidelines:

- **STAY AT HOME** until you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of any fever-reducing medicines. Anyone of any age who has flu-like illness should avoid public gatherings such as workplaces or schools. Persons who live in places like nursing homes or group homes should only gather in common areas if they are free of these symptoms. Persons who visit nursing homes, schools, church gatherings or other places where people will gather should only attend if they are free of these symptoms.
- **REST AND DRINK PLENTY OF LIQUIDS.** Avoid alcoholic beverages.
- **AVOID CLOSE CONTACT WITH OTHERS.** Avoid close contact such as kissing, sharing toothbrushes or drinks with people who are not sick. Try to stay in one room, as far away from others as possible.

- **COVER YOUR MOUTH AND NOSE.** Always cover your mouth and nose when sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose.
- **WASH YOUR HANDS.** Rub your hands with an alcohol-based hand gel or wash them with soap and water right after you sneeze, cough or throw a used tissue in the trash.

If you are in one of the higher risk groups listed above, you should call your health care provider if you develop flu-like symptoms.

If you have a medical provider, call the office for guidance. Your provider can prescribe anti-viral medications if needed.

Only go to your local hospital if you have no other source of care and you think you are seriously ill.

**How do you know if you or your children are seriously ill?** In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention 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
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough

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

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

The Guilford County Department of Public Health encourages everyone to use good personal hygiene such as frequent and thorough hand washing with warm water and soap or alcohol-based hand sanitizers, covering coughs and sneezes with a disposable tissue or by coughing or sneezing into a bended elbow or sleeve, and staying home if you are sick.

For more information about seasonal flu and H1N1, visit [www.guilfordhealth.org](http://www.guilfordhealth.org) or [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)