

Frequently Asked Questions about H1N1 Flu

What is H1N1 (swine flu, pandemic flu, novel influenza)?

H1N1 is a new strain of flu that very few have immunity to. Because of this, it is easily spread and, in some cases, can cause serious illness.

How do people become infected with H1N1?

By breathing in droplets in the air from an infected person's sneeze or cough, and/or by touching a contaminated surface, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

How do I know if I have H1N1?

The symptoms are similar to the seasonal flu which may include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting. The only positive diagnosis is by way of a lab test. In general, this is not necessary because H1N1 is usually mild. Your doctor will order a lab test, if appropriate.

How do I know if it is the flu, a cold, or allergies?

The flu generally includes a high fever, headache, fatigue lasting 2-3 weeks, severe aches and pains, sometimes a stuffy nose and sore throat, cough, severe chest discomfort, and can lead to complications such as pneumonia.

Is there any treatment for H1N1?

There is no specific treatment for H1N1. You can take over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) for fever, aches and pains; or cough suppressant for cough, to treat the symptoms and make you more comfortable while you recover. In certain cases, your health care provider may prescribe an antiviral drug. Generally, H1N1 does not require prescription medications.

Is there a vaccine for H1N1?

A vaccine for H1N1 is presently being developed. It should be ready for administration this fall.

How can I protect myself from getting H1N1?

Basic flu prevention which includes:

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Avoid others who are sick
- Avoid sharing personal items such as eating/drinking utensils, and towels
- Eat well, get enough rest, be active, and don't smoke
- Get vaccinated when seasonal flu and H1N1 vaccine become available.

What is ARC doing as a college to prevent the spread of H1N1?

- Educating the campus students and employees about H1N1
- Increasing the frequency of janitorial cleaning with disinfectants
- Providing hand sanitizers at campus counters
- Providing information and consultation in the Health Center. Drop in or call 484-8383.

Where can I find reliable information about H1N1?

The following websites have reliable information: The Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu), the County of Sacramento Department of Health and Human Services (www.sacdhhs.com), and the California Department of Public Health (www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo).