

# H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) Fact Sheet

## What is H1N1 Influenza?

H1N1 flu, also known as “swine flu,” is a respiratory disease caused by a type of influenza virus. There are several different types of the “H1N1” flu virus. One type causes illness in pigs. Another type causes illness in people. Recently, a new type of H1N1 flu has been found to cause illness in people. Since March 2009, there have been many cases of this new type of H1N1 flu in the United States and around the world.

## What are the Symptoms of H1N1?

The new H1N1 flu causes symptoms very similar to seasonal flu. Just like seasonal flu, the most common symptoms are fever, cough, and sore throat. They can also include body aches, headache, chills and feeling very tired. Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting.

## How is H1N1 Spread?

H1N1 flu is spread like other seasonal flu viruses are spread, mainly through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with the virus. People may become infected by touching something with the flu virus on it and then touching their mouth, eyes or nose.

## What Steps Should be Taken if Someone is Suspected to be Ill?

Staff should be diligent about early recognition of illness and rapid isolation of those who are experiencing flu symptoms. People who develop flu symptoms should be separated from the general population and away from well children until they can be safely returned home.

## When Should Medical Attention be Sought?

Not all people who develop flu need to seek medical attention. However, medical care is needed immediately if the person is having difficulty breathing or having chest pain, if they have purple or blue discoloration of the lips, if they are vomiting and unable to keep liquids down or if they have a seizure.

## What Infection Control Measures Should be Used for Ill Persons?

Linens, eating utensils, and dishes used by those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but they should not be shared without thorough washing. Linens such as bed sheets and towels should be washed in hot water using laundry detergent and tumbled dry on a hot setting. Individuals handling linens should wash their hands thoroughly after handling dirty laundry. When handling dirty laundry, hold it away from the body. Don't “hug” it close to you. Handle trash that may contain dirty tissues with gloves and wash hands afterwards.

## What General Infection Control Measures Should be Taken?

**Hand Washing:** Wash your hands and have children wash their hands frequently with water and liquid soap. Remember to wash at least 20 seconds, rinse and dry well with a paper towel. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers should only be used when soap and water is not available. Keep these products out of the reach of children and only let children use them with supervision. Hand washing should be done before preparing or eating food, after going to the bathroom, before and after caring for someone who is sick, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, after handling garbage, after handling animals or when hands are visibly soiled. Ensure that sink locations are stocked with plenty of soap and clean paper towels.

**Disinfection:** Regularly clean areas and items that are likely to have frequent hand contact such as door knobs, faucets, handrails, toys etc. Use cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas; it is not necessary to disinfect these areas beyond routine cleaning. See WV Rule 64CSR21 for complete regulations.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze or cough **or** cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not into your hands. Teach children to do the same. Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing. Make sure tissues are available in all areas of child care.

## Can You Get Swine Flu From Eating Pork Products?

No. H1N1 viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get infected with swine flu by eating pork or pork products.

## Other Information and CDC Recommendations for Child Care Programs

Remind staff to stay home if they have flu-like symptoms.

Parents should have a back-up plan for child care in case their child is sick.

Make sure everyone is up-to-date on their vaccinations.

The CDC recommends anyone infected with flu should stay home until they have been symptom free for at least 24 hours. Anyone diagnosed with the Swine Flu should stay away from child care for at least seven days after the start of the illness. They should be fever free for at least 24 hours.

*Closure of child care programs is not currently recommended due to novel H1N1 influenza in the community or the child care facility. Child care programs should follow the above recommendations for schools along with the other recommendations in this section.*

- Child care programs should work closely and directly with their local and State public health officials to make appropriate decisions and implement strategies in a coordinated manner.
- Child care providers should conduct daily health checks on all children. Although daily health checks have been recommended for child care programs before the current H1N1 flu situation, programs that do not conduct routine daily health checks should institute this practice.
- Ill children should stay home and not be taken out of one child care program and put into another child care program even temporarily.
- Childcare facilities should clean and sanitize frequently-touched surfaces, (such as desks, doorknobs, computer keyboards, toys) routinely and if they become visibly soiled.
- Child care programs can help serve as a focus for educational activities aimed at promoting ways to reduce the spread of influenza, including hand hygiene and cough etiquette.

## Other Resources

WV Bureau of Public Health Swine Flu Page

<http://www.wvdep.org/Home/HotTopicSwineInfluenza/tabid/1856/default.aspx>

WV Division of Health Rules for Child Care Centers 64CSR21

<http://www.wvsos.com/csr/verify.asp?TitleSeries=64-21>

CDC Swine Flu Information Page for Schools and Child Care Providers

This site also includes posters and classroom materials that can be printed.

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/index.htm>

WV Child Care Centers Rules

<http://www.wvsos.com/csr/verify.asp?TitleSeries=78-01>

WV Family Child Care Rules

<http://www.wvsos.com/csr/verify.asp?TitleSeries=78-18>

**This information is based on the latest recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/)**

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