

Novel Influenza A H1N1 Infection Information for Concerned Parents and Caregivers

What Is Novel Influenza A H1N1

Novel Influenza A is a virus that causes respiratory disease that can spread between people. Most people infected with this virus in the United States have had mild disease, but some have had more severe illness, and there has been at least one death. Young children, pregnant women, and people with chronic diseases like asthma, diabetes, or heart disease may be at higher risk for complications from this infection. There are steps you can take to protect your family and to know when to seek medical care.

What Are The Symptoms?

In most children, the symptoms of Novel Influenza A H1N1 are similar to the symptoms of regular flu. They include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Sometimes children will have vomiting and diarrhea.

Typically, flu infections cause mild disease in children, but children under 5 years old are more likely to have serious illness than older children. Although rare, severe respiratory illness (pneumonia) and deaths have been reported with flu infections in children. Flu infections tend to be more severe in children with chronic medical conditions.

How To Keep From Getting It:

Flu viruses spread from person to person mainly through the coughing or sneezing of a sick person. Flu virus may also be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with the virus and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. The Novel H1N1 virus spreads the same way as other flu viruses. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of influenza:

- Teach your children to wash their hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cough and sneeze into a tissue or into the inside of their elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to stay at least six feet away from people who are sick.
- Children who are sick should stay home from school and daycare and stay away from other people until they are better.
- In communities where flu is widespread, stay away from shopping malls, movie theaters, or other places where there are large groups of people.
- Vaccinate your child with the H1N1 Influenza Vaccine when it is available.

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What To Do If Your Child Is Sick:

Mild Illness

- For mild illness, keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school, daycare, or take them into a medical office. Children should stay home until they have not taken fever reducing drugs and have had no fever for 24 hours.
- Have them drink a lot of liquid (juice, water, Pedialyte®, or Gatoraid).
- Keep the sick child comfortable. Rest is important.
- For fever less than 103° sore throat, and muscle aches, you can use fever-reducing medicines that your doctor recommends based on your child's age. Do not use aspirin with children or teenagers; it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
- If someone in your home is sick, keep him or her away from those who are not sick.
- Keep tissues close to the sick person and have a trash bag within reach for disposing used tissues.

More Severe Illness

If Your Child's Illness Is More Severe And He/She Has Any Of The Following Symptoms, Call Your Medical Provider.

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Drinking less than normal
- Urinating less than normal or not at all
- Having no tears when crying
- Not waking up or not responding to you
- Being so irritable that he or she does not want to be held
- They seemed to be getting better and then their fever and/or cough return

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/schoolguidance.htm