



## 1. What is new influenza A H1N1?

It's a respiratory infection caused by a virus (germ) that regularly causes flu in pigs. The virus has been transmitted to humans and can easily spread from one person to another, just like the common flu.

## 2. How does new influenza A H1N1 spread?

The virus can be spread from person to person just like any other type of flu—through small droplets produced by a sick person, especially when they cough or sneeze. However, a person can transmit the infection even before they have any symptoms.

## 3. What are the symptoms of new influenza A H1N1?

They're like the symptoms of a common flu and include:

- Fever (over 101°F, 38.3°C)
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Body aches
- Nasal congestion
- Chills
- Tiredness and weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

If you have any of the following severe symptoms, go to your doctor immediately:

### For children

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Dehydration; not able to drink enough liquids
- Not waking up, not interacting
- Confusion, being disoriented
- Fever and skin rash

### For adults

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

## 4. What is the treatment for new influenza A H1N1?

- Most people don't need medication to get better. If the flu is in your area and you have severe symptoms, your doctor may prescribe antivirals (such as Tamiflu® or Relenza®) to prevent complications. Taking medication doesn't guarantee that the flu will go away or that the virus will be less contagious.
- Don't take medicine or antibiotics that have been prescribed for someone else; this will prevent germs from becoming resistant to the medication.
- Avoid taking home remedies or any other products from places referred to as "botanicas" because they don't work against the virus.
- Don't take any product that contains aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to lessen flu symptoms since it may cause a serious illness called Reye's Syndrome.
- Fever and body aches can be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol®), ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®), or naproxen (Aleve®).
- Drinking lots of fluids and resting.

## 5. What can I do to prevent infection from the new flu virus?

Do what you normally do to protect yourself against the flu. For example:

- **Cover** your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze.
- **Wash** your hands frequently using water and soap for 20 seconds each time (the time it takes to sing *Happy Birthday* two times, at a normal speed). Alcohol-based hand sanitizers (such as Purell®) are also effective.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- **Practice healthy habits.** Get enough rest, eat healthily, and exercise to maintain a strong body and be able to fight germs.
- **Avoid close contact** with sick people.

## 6. What else do I need to know about this new flu virus?

- The World Health Organization increased the alert level, recognizing that the flu has now spread to many countries throughout the world. Even though this sounds alarming, it does not mean that the illness will be any more severe than the regular, seasonal flu we have in Los Angeles County every year.
- Different types of germs cause different types of flu. This variance of influenza A H1N1 is new, which is why this season's flu vaccine will not protect you against it. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are investigating the development of a flu vaccine for this type of virus. Until then, wash your hands, cover your cough or sneeze, and stay home if you are sick with any kind of flu virus.
- Avoid using emergency rooms or calling 9-1-1 unless you have any of the *severe* symptoms described above. For more information about community clinics, outpatient services, or low-cost medical insurance, dial 2-1-1 from any phone (including land lines or cell phones) within Los Angeles County.
- It is not necessary to wear a mask. Some clinics will ask sick patients to wear a mask when in a waiting room or in an exam room; this is to prevent the patient from infecting others. Healthy people do not need to wear a mask, as the mask loses its protective value quickly while it is used.
- It's safe to attend social activities (going to the park, community fair, or a football game) if you feel well. If you or your child is sick, stay home or keep your child home so you can recover and avoid spreading illness to others.
- Common cleaning products (such as Clorox®, Lysol®, Mr. Clean®, Fabuloso®) effectively kill flu-causing germs. You do not need to take cleaning measures beyond normal practices.
- There are no restrictions for traveling to Mexico, but you should use your best judgment when deciding if and when you should travel. If you are sick, it is not recommended that you travel.

## 7. Where can I get more information?

- **United States:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) or [www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu)
- **State:** California Department of Public Health: 1-888-865-0564 or [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)
- **Local:** Los Angeles County Department of Public Health: call **2-1-1** from any phone, or visit [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov)