

What to Do About the Flu

With all the reports in the news media about the ongoing pandemic flu outbreak, it can often be difficult to sort fact from fiction. How can you determine if the fever and body aches you or a loved one are experiencing might be the flu or something else? And what steps you should take if you think you may have the flu?



So Just What is the Flu?

Flu is a severe respiratory infection caused by a virus. Symptoms can come on suddenly.

A pandemic flu outbreak happens when a new virus (like the novel H1N1) appears and spreads easily and quickly because people don't have immunity to it. And because of that, it often *causes more serious health effects than the regular seasonal flu.*

Health experts from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believe a pandemic flu outbreak is occurring worldwide and anticipate that it will get worse in the U.S. during the upcoming flu season. Local health officials want to caution that a pandemic flu outbreak is anticipated to get worse during the upcoming flu season impacting our county and may cause

disruption of work, schools, the food supply and might even affect health care services.

Before the flu season begins, discuss vaccination recommendations with your healthcare provider.

How Can You Tell if You Have the Flu?

The symptoms of the novel H1N1* virus are similar to the seasonal flu, with some people reporting diarrhea and vomiting associated with the flu. The novel H1N1 virus may also cause a worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as heart disease, asthma, and diabetes, just as the seasonal flu. Contact your health care provider immediately if you suspect you have the flu. ***Only a physician may determine if you have the flu and whether it is the novel H1N1 virus or the seasonal flu.***

Flu Symptoms

- ✓ Fever of 100° or higher
- ✓ Dry cough
- ✓ Sore throat
- ✓ Body aches
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Chills
- ✓ Tiredness
- ✓ Respiratory congestion

Steps to Take to Protect Yourself and Your Family

If you think you or a family member has the flu.

Contact your health care provider immediately if you suspect you have the flu.

Those considered at high risk for the novel H1N1 virus include pregnant women, children and young adults from 6 months to 24 years, and people 25 to 64 years with underlying medical conditions. Only your healthcare provider may tell for certain if you have the flu. Follow your health care provider's directions. Use fever-reducing medicines and cough or cold medicines. Check with your healthcare provider before giving medicines to infants or young children. If you begin treatment early, you may lessen the time you are sick or the severity of the illness.

Also, stay home from work or school and don't leave the house except for medical care.

If you or someone in your family has the flu.

Here are some steps you can take to help the sick person and keep the flu from spreading



to someone else. Isolate the sick person if you can. Have them stay in a separate room in the house with the door closed and use a separate bathroom if possible. Do not permit visitors for the sick

person and only one person should care for him/her if possible. Avoid close personal contact with the sick person as much as possible and limit the time someone spends with them. Have the sick person and everyone else in your family wear a face mask if possible.

Practice good hygiene. Have the sick person use a tissue or their sleeve to cover coughs and sneezes. Everyone should wash hands

or use hand sanitizer frequently and especially after each time they are with the sick person. Use paper towels for drying hands or designate a separate towel for each person in the house. Keep household surfaces clean and disinfected. Never share dishes, eating utensils, or linens with the sick person until they are thoroughly cleaned. Try not to permit children to share toys.

Finally, check often for symptoms of the flu in yourself and family members.