

H1N1 FLU SAFETY

(Formally known as Swine Flu)

The Center for Disease Control expects a surge of illnesses associated with H1N1 in the fall. So what can you do here at work and at home to prepare for it and protect yourself, your colleagues, and your family?

Symptoms

The symptoms of novel H1N1 flu are much like the symptoms of regular influenza. Individuals have fever (temperature of 100°F or greater), as well as other symptoms such as: headache, sore throat, body aches and extreme fatigue (tiredness), coughing, sneezing, runny nose, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Don't be alarmed. Most cases of the flu cause mild illness and do not require hospitalization. The majority of patients recover quickly and with no problems.

What should you do if you suspect that you or a family member has Novel H1N1 Flu?

ISOLATE YOURSELF

- Staying away from others is the most important thing you or a sick family member can do to stop the spread of infection!!
- At home, keep the sick person in another room away from other people in the house for 7 days from onset of being sick.
- If the sick person needs to move around the home, that person should wear a mask over his/her nose and mouth.
- The sick person should not travel on airplanes or buses, and should not go to work, school, daycare, church, or other public places for at least 7 days after showing signs of illness.
- Please stay home! Also other members of the household are encouraged to stay home during that time.

PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE

- The sick person and everyone around the sick person should wash their hands very frequently with soap and warm water.
- Use alcohol hand sanitizer frequently.
- DO NOT share eating utensils, drinking glasses, washcloths, towels, beds, pillows, etc. until everyone in the household has been free of symptoms for 7 days.
- COVER YOUR COUGH AND SNEEZE with the crook of your elbow **or** use a tissue and throw away the tissue immediately.
- Use a tissue for a runny nose, then dispose of the tissue in a waste basket immediately.
- After using a tissue, clean your hands with soap and water, or with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

MOST OF THE TIME, YOU CAN TREAT THE FLU EASILY AT HOME

- The flu is caused by a VIRUS and does NOT respond to antibiotics.
- Consider taking acetaminophen (Tylenol) as directed on the bottle for fevers, headache, and body aches. Aspirin is not recommended for individuals under 19 years of age.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. This is especially important if you have high fever, vomiting, or diarrhea.

SEEK MEDICAL TREATMENT IF NECESSARY

- Sometimes it is appropriate to seek medical treatment from your doctor. People who are more likely to need medical treatment from their doctor for influenza infection are those who are very young, very old, or have serious medical conditions (such as cancer, HIV, severe diabetes, lung disease, or are on dialysis).
- If you think you need medical treatment, CALL your doctor's office first!! Your doctor may want to speak with you over the phone and recommend treatments, rather than have you come into the office, where you can infect other people.
- If you go to your doctor's office, wear a mask and inform the staff immediately that you have flu-like symptoms so that you can be placed in an area away from other patients.
- **Most cases of flu DO NOT require treatment at the Emergency Room!!! Please DO NOT call 911 or go to the emergency room for flu-like symptoms unless you have any of these symptoms: Adults: confusion, severe headache not improved by Tylenol, Advil, or Motrin, difficulty breathing, chest pain, fainting, continuous vomiting or diarrhea; Children: fast breathing or trouble breathing, bluish skin color, not drinking enough fluids, not waking up or not interacting with people as usual, being very irritable (not wanting to be held), worsening fever and cough, or fever with rash.**