

Preparing for the Flu Season

What is seasonal flu?

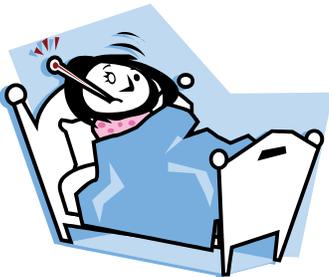
Seasonal flu is caused by influenza (flu) viruses that have been interacting with humans for many years. Most of our immune systems have been exposed to influenza viruses at some time in our lives. Every year, these viruses change a little bit so a new seasonal flu vaccine is developed each year.

How is Novel H1N1 different than the seasonal flu?

Novel H1N1 is a novel virus, meaning humans, until recently, have never been infected with this virus. The virus changed in a way that enabled it to go from infecting only animals to infecting humans as well.

Novel viruses are dangerous because our immune systems have no previous experience battling them. Although the seasonal flu is most dangerous to those with weak immune systems, such as the very young and the elderly, the Novel H1N1 virus appears to be a threat to healthy, young adults.

Novel H1N1 viruses are not spread by food. You can not get infected with Novel H1N1 virus from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.



What are the symptoms of Novel H1N1?

The symptoms of Novel H1N1 flu are very similar to seasonal flu. They include:

Fever 100°F or higher
Head and body aches

Cough
Sore throat
Chills

Trouble breathing
Vomiting and/or diarrhea

Who is at risk for seasonal and Novel H1N1 flu?

The rules for who is at high risk for seasonal flu complications do not seem to apply to Novel H1N1 flu at the moment. The Novel H1N1 virus affects young people, pregnant women, people who are obese, and those with underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, kidney or heart disease, or asthma.

What can I do to prevent getting sick?

- ☑ Wash your hands with soap and hot water to get rid of germs and to prevent the spread of disease. If you do not have soap and water, use a waterless hand gel with an alcohol base of at least 60%.

- ☑ Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.

- ☑ Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

- ☑ Get the seasonal flu vaccine, and if you are in a risk group for Novel H1N1, get that vaccine when it becomes available.



What should I do if I think I or someone in my household is sick?

- If you have a fever 100°F or higher, and one of the symptoms listed earlier, consider calling your doctor or medical provider if you feel moderate to severe symptoms. Your doctor will decide if you need to come in for an appointment and if influenza treatment is needed.
- Stay away from others as much as possible to prevent spreading the flu. This means avoiding normal activities including work, school, travel, shopping, social events and public gatherings. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) recommends staying at home until you have no fever for at least 24 hours without the help of fever-reducing medicines.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when you sneeze or cough, and throw the tissue in the trash afterwards.
- Make sure the person who is sick stays at home and gets plenty of rest and fluids. Limit visitors.
- Most people with influenza recover at home without complications. Monitor them for warning signs that the illness is getting worse.



When Should I Call My Healthcare Provider?

If you observe any of the following warning signs, call their doctor immediately:

Warning signs in children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and a worse cough

Warning signs in adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and a worse cough



To prevent the spread of the flu virus in your home:

- Keep frequently used surfaces clean with a household disinfectant, i.e. bedside tables, bathroom and kitchen surfaces, and children's toys.
- Linens, eating utensils and dishes that are used by the person who is sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but should not be shared without washing thoroughly with soap and water.
- Wash linens (i.e. bed sheets and towels) by using regular laundry soap. Dry on the "hot" setting.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub after handling the sick person's linens, utensils or used tissues.
- Allow fresh air to flow into your home by opening screened windows and doors.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



For more information

Public Health Hot Lines

California Department of Public Health: 1-888-865-0564
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC): 1-800-232-4636

Amador County Public Health : (209) 223-6407
visit: www.co.amador.ca.us/depts/public_health