

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick from 2009 H1N1 flu?

CDC recommends a three-step approach to fighting the flu: vaccination, everyday preventive actions including frequent hand washing and staying home when sick, and the correct use of antiviral drugs if your doctor recommends them.

There is a vaccine against 2009 H1N1. To protect those at greatest risk of 2009 H1N1, CDC recommends that certain people get the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine first when it becomes available. These key groups include people who are at higher risk of getting sick or having serious flu complications, those who are likely to come in contact with 2009 H1N1, and those who could infect young infants who cannot be vaccinated themselves. This includes:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or provide care for children younger than 6 months of age,
- Health care and emergency medical service personnel
- People 6 months to 24 years of age, and People 25 to 64 years of age who are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications because of an underlying health condition or compromised immune systems.

Flu symptoms can include: Fever*, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

*It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

Everyday actions can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home if you are sick. CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.

Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home for several days; a supply of over-the-counter medicines, alcohol-based hand rubs, tissues, facemasks and other related items might be useful and help avoid the need to make trips out in public while you are sick and contagious.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you become ill with influenza-like symptoms this flu season you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to seek medical care. Most people have been able to recover at home from 2009 H1N1 without needing medical care and the same is true of seasonal flu. However, some people are at high risk of serious flu-related complications. They are: Children

younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old; People 65 and older; Pregnant women; People who have Cancer; Blood disorders (including sickle cell disease); Chronic lung disease [including asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)]; Diabetes; Heart disease; Kidney disorders; Liver disorders; Neurological disorders (including nervous system, brain or spinal cord); Neuromuscular disorders (including muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis); Weakened immune systems (including people with AIDS).

Are there medicines to treat infection with this new virus?

Yes. There are prescriptions drugs called “antivirals” that can treat influenza illness, including 2009 H1N1.

For more information visit

www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu or www.flu.gov or call 800-CDC-INFO