



# H1N1 Q&A

## H1N1 INFLUENZA

### **What is H1N1 influenza?**

H1N1 influenza (previously referred to as “swine flu”) is a respiratory disease caused by type A influenza viruses. Beginning in April 2009, several thousand cases of human infection with H1N1 influenza reported around the world led to the World Health Organization declaring an influenza pandemic in June 2009.

### **How is H1N1 influenza spread?**

H1N1 influenza is spread like seasonal flu, when a person coughs or sneezes, sending contaminated respiratory droplets into the air where another person may inhale them. Sometimes people may become infected by touching a contaminated surface or object and then touching their own eyes, nose or mouth.

### **What are the symptoms of H1N1 influenza?**

The symptoms of H1N1 influenza are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu, and may include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, runny or stuffy nose and tiredness. Some people also report having nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Although the cases of H1N1 in 2009 have so far been mostly mild, it was fatal in a small percentage of people. The virus appears to affect pregnant women, young children and people with obesity. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 may cause underlying chronic medical conditions to worsen.

### **Who is at risk for getting H1N1 influenza?**

In early 2009 the H1N1 influenza virus began to pass easily from person-to-person when an infected person had close contact with another person. A person who has H1N1 influenza may be able to infect other people from one day before his/her symptoms develop to seven days after symptoms begin.

### **What is the best way to protect myself against H1N1 influenza?**

Health officials encourage community members to protect themselves by following proven disease prevention methods, which include—

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water,
- Keeping a distance of at least six feet from people who are sick, and
- Maintaining a healthy lifestyle in order to build up the immune system.

Individuals who are sick are encouraged to protect their family and their community by —

- Staying home when they are sick or have a fever,
- Covering their cough or sneeze, and
- Avoiding sharing personal items such as utensils, drinks or a toothbrush.

### **What should I do if I develop symptoms of H1N1 influenza?**

People who develop flu-like symptoms should contact their health care provider.

### **How is H1N1 influenza treated?**

Two antiviral medications have proven to be effective against H1N1 influenza and may be prescribed by an individual’s health care provider.