

## Novel H1N1 Influenza Update

August 2009

**Q: What is the current status of novel Influenza A (H1N1)?**

A: During the summer, the novel (A) H1N1 flu continued its spread across the U.S. affecting over an estimated one million persons. This level of flu activity was higher than what we expect for this time of year. Most of the cases have been among persons 5 to 24 years old.

**Q: Who is at increased risk of complications from the novel H1N1 virus?**

A: Pregnant women, children less than 5 years old, persons whose immune systems are compromised, and persons with chronic medical conditions have a higher risk of complications. People 65 years and older have been less affected than younger age groups so far.

**Q: What about a vaccine?**

A: The best way to protect against the flu is to get a yearly vaccine. This year the CDC recommends two different vaccines for everyone over the age of 6 months: one against the seasonal flu, the other to protect persons from the novel H1N1 flu. Shortages are not expected, but if supplies of the novel H1N1 vaccine are limited initially, the following groups should get it first:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel with direct patient contact
- Children 6 months through 4 years of age
- Children 5 through 18 years of age who have chronic medical conditions

Followed by:

- Children and adults from 5 to 24 years
- People aged 25 to 64 years with underlying medical conditions (e.g. asthma, diabetes)

As vaccine supply increases and demand among priority groups is met, the CDC recommends that other adults receive the novel H1N1 vaccine.

**Q: What are symptoms for the novel H1N1 flu?**

A: The symptoms are similar to the seasonal flu: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Some people also report vomiting and/or diarrhea.

**Q: What should I do if I have flu symptoms?**

A: The same basic steps apply to both children and adults:

- **Call the doctor.** He/she may prescribe antiviral medicines if you are at higher risk of complications.
- **Stay home** until at least 24 hours after you have no fever (100° F) or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- **Get plenty of rest.**
- **Drink clear fluids**, such as water, broth or sports drinks to keep from becoming dehydrated.
- **Limit contact with others** as much as possible. Stay in a room separate from common areas of the house, if possible, and keep the door of that room closed.

Do *not* give a child younger than 18 years any aspirin or products containing aspirin.

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(continued)

***Q: I'm pregnant. What if I have flu symptoms?***

A: Pregnant women are at increased risk for complications if infected with the flu virus. If you are pregnant and have flu symptoms, call your doctor right away.

***Q: When should I seek urgent medical attention for my child?***

A: Seek medical attention immediately if your child has one of the following:

- 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 he or she does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough

***Q: When should an adult seek urgent medical attention?***

A: Seek medical attention immediately if an adult has one of the following:

- Difficulty breathing
- 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 worse cough

***Q: What can my family do to prevent the spread of flu?***

A: Basic hygiene can help stop the spread of both seasonal flu and novel H1N1 flu:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw your used tissues in the trash can.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Use hand sanitizer if you cannot wash your hands.

***Q: Where can I get more information?***

- A:
- For the most current information, check out the CDC website: [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu).
  - Ask H1N1 flu questions on-line at the Virginia Department of Health website: [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov) or call its toll free H1N1 hotline, Mondays through Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at **1-877-ASK-VDH3** (1-877-275-8343).

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