

# FactSheet

Para Su Información

## 2009 H1N1 Flu

### **What is 2009 H1N1 flu?**

2009 H1N1 is a type of influenza (flu) virus that causes respiratory disease that can spread between people.

Most people infected with this virus in the United States have had mild disease. Young children, pregnant women and people with chronic diseases may be at higher risk for complications from this infection.

### **What's the difference between 2009 H1N1 flu and seasonal flu?**

There are very few differences between the two strains. Both are influenza A strains that can cause illness.

### **What are the symptoms of 2009 H1N1 flu?**

The symptoms of the 2009 H1N1 flu are similar to seasonal flu and include cough, fever, chills, body aches, headache, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose and fatigue. Some people may have diarrhea and vomiting.

Severe illness (e.g., pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths sometimes result from infection with an influenza virus and have been reported with this specific strain. Like seasonal flu, 2009 H1N1 flu may worsen underlying chronic medical conditions.

### **How does 2009 H1N1 flu spread?**

The 2009 H1N1 virus spreads like the seasonal flu.

It is spread mainly from person-to-person through coughing or sneezing. People may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth, eyes or nose.

### **How long can an infected person spread 2009 H1N1 flu to others?**

Infected people may be able to spread the virus from one day before getting sick to five to seven days after. You may be able to spread the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as during your illness.

People with 2009 H1N1 infection are potentially contagious as long as they have symptoms. Children, especially younger children, may be contagious for longer periods.

### **Is there a vaccine for 2009 H1N1?**

The Food and Drug Administration recently approved a 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine. For more information about vaccine availability, call the flu hotline at 759-INFO (759-4636) or check the health district's website for updates at [www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org](http://www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org).

### **How do I protect myself from getting sick?**

The best way to protect yourself and your family is to prevent the spread of germs.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth as germs spread this way.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Get a seasonal flu shot.

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It is also recommended that you maintain good general health, get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Avoid touching surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

### **How should I take care of myself or someone in my family who is sick?**

- If you or someone in your home has chronic medical conditions, such as asthma or diabetes, check with your health care provider about special care recommendations.
- Keep sick family members home. Get plenty of rest, drink plenty of fluids, cover your cough, wash your hands, and use fever-reducing medicines as directed by your health care provider or the package directions.
- CDC guidelines recommend that people stay home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- Monitor your other family members daily for flu symptoms and keep them at home if they become ill.

### **How do I know if I should go to the doctor or emergency room?**

A majority of people with 2009 H1N1 or seasonal flu recover without medication or medical treatment.

If you have severe illness or you are at high risk for flu complications, contact your doctor or seek medical care.

If you or a family member experiences any of these warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing (call 911 immediately)
- Bluish or gray skin color (call 911 immediately)
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being irritable and not wanting to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and a worse cough or fever with a rash
- Severe or persistent vomiting

In adults:

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

### **How do I know if I have 2009 H1N1 flu?**

2009 H1N1 is confirmed by laboratory testing done by your doctor. Testing is only recommended if patients are severely ill or at risk for complications.

Like seasonal flu, people with underlying medical conditions, like asthma or diabetes, are more likely to have serious flu complications.

Most people who have been infected have experienced mild illness and recover in a few days without seeking medical care.

### **Is there medication to treat the flu?**

Antiviral medication is only recommended for people who are severely ill or at risk of serious complications from 2009 H1N1 flu.

Antiviral medication must be prescribed by a doctor.

### **How long can viruses live outside the body?**

Some viruses and bacteria can live two hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs and desks. Frequent hand washing will help reduce your chance of getting sick.

### **Where can I get more information?**

Go to the CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or the Southern Nevada Health District's website at [www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org](http://www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org).



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