
Patient Information Sheet – Novel H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu)

Signs of Novel H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu):

The symptoms of novel H1N1 flu are much like the symptoms of regular influenza. Individuals have fever (temperature of 100°F or greater), as well as other symptoms such as:

- Headache
- Sore throat
- Body aches and extreme fatigue (tiredness)
- Coughing, sneezing, runny nose
- Vomiting and diarrhea

What to do if you suspect that you or your family member has Novel H1N1 Flu?

- ✓ **DO NOT BE ALARMED**
 - Most cases of the flu cause mild illness that DO NOT require hospitalization.
 - The majority of patients recover quickly with no problems.
- ✓ **ISOLATE YOURSELF**
 - Staying away from others is the most important thing you or your sick family member can do to stop the spread of infection!!
 - Keep the sick person in another room of the home, away from other people in the house, for at least 7 days after that person shows signs of being sick.
 - If the sick person needs to move around the home, that person should wear a mask over his/her nose and mouth.
 - The sick person, AND ALL MEMBERS OF THAT HOUSEHOLD, should not travel on airplanes or buses, and should not go to work, school, church, or other public places for at least 7 days after the member of the home shows signs of being sick. STAY HOME!!
- ✓ **PRACTICE GOOD HYGEINE**
 - The sick person and everyone around the sick person should wash their hands very frequently with soap and warm water.
 - Use alcohol hand sanitizer frequently.
 - DO NOT share eating utensils, drinking glasses, washcloths, towels, beds, etc. until everyone in the household has been free of symptoms for 7 days.
 - COVER YOUR COUGH AND SNEEZE with the crook of your elbow or a tissue (throw away the tissue immediately).
 - Use a tissue for runny nose, dispose of the tissue in a waste basket immediately.

✓ **MOST OF THE TIME, YOU CAN TREAT THE FLU EASILY AT HOME**

- The flu is caused by a VIRUS and does NOT respond to antibiotics.
- Take Tylenol or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) as directed on the bottle for fevers, headache, and body aches.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. This is especially important if you have high fever, vomiting, or diarrhea.

✓ **SEEK MEDICAL TREATMENT IF NECESSARY**

- Sometimes it is appropriate to seek medical treatment from your doctor. People who are more likely to need medical treatment from their doctor are those who are very young, very old, or have serious medical conditions (such as cancer, HIV, severe diabetes, lung disease, or are on dialysis).
- If you think you need medical treatment, **CALL** your doctor's office first!! Your doctor may want to speak with you over the phone and recommend treatments, rather than have you come into the office, where you can infect other people.
- If you go to your doctor's office, wear a mask and inform the staff immediately that you have flu-like symptoms so that you can be placed in an area away from other patients.
- **Most cases of flu DO NOT require treatment at the Emergency Room!!! Please DO NOT call 911 or go to the emergency room for flu-like symptoms unless you have any of these symptoms:**

- **IN ADULTS:**

- **Confusion**
- **Severe headache not improved by Tylenol or ibuprofen**
- **Difficulty breathing**
- **Chest pain**
- **Fainting**
- **Continuous vomiting or diarrhea**

- **IN CHILDREN:**

- **Fast breathing or trouble breathing**
- **Bluish skin color**
- **Not drinking enough fluids**
- **Not waking up or not interacting with people as usual**
- **Being very irritable, not wanting to be held**
- **Worsening fever and cough**
- **Fever with rash**

An electronic version of this document can be found at <http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/heic/h1n1>