



HASKELL INDIAN NATIONS UNIVERSITY
155 Indian Avenue
Lawrence, KS 66046
WWW.haskell.edu

Novel H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) Is a new Influenza virus causing illness in people.

This virus was originally referred to as “swine flu” because laboratory testing showed that many of the genes in this new virus were very similar to Influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs (swine).

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SWINE FLU IN PEOPLE?

The symptoms of novel H1N1 in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include:

Fever	aches
Cough	headache
Sore throat	chills
Body	fatigue

A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Also, like seasonal flu, severe illnesses and death has occurred as a result of illness associated with this virus.

IS NOVEL H1N1 CONTAGIOUS?

CDC has determined that novel H1N1 virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, it is not known how easily the virus spreads between people. The main way that influenza viruses are thought to spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes.

At the current time, CDC believes that this virus has the same properties in terms of spread as seasonal flu viruses. With seasonal flu, studies have shown that people may be contagious from one day before they develop symptoms to up to 7 days after they get sick.

NOVEL H1N1 (Swine Flu)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

“Information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention”

HOW SEVERE IS ILLNESS ASSOCIATED WITH NOVEL H1N1 FLU VIRUS?

It’s not known at this time how severe novel H1N1 flu virus will be in the general population. In seasonal flu, there are certain people that are at higher risk of serious flu-related complications. This includes people 65 years and older, children younger than five years old, pregnant women, and people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions. Early indications are that pregnancy and other previously recognized medical conditions that increase the risk of influenza-related complications, like asthma and diabetes, also appear to be associated with increased

CAN I GET INFECTED WITH NOVEL H1N1 VIRUS FROM EATING OR PREPARING PORK?

No. Novel H1N1 viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get infected with novel H1N1 virus from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

IF I HAVE A FAMILY MEMBER OR ROOMMATE AT HOME WHO IS SICK WITH NOVEL H1N1 FLU, SHOULD I GO TO SCHOOL OR WORK?

Students who are well but who have an ill person at home with novel H1N1 flu can go to school and work as usual. These people should monitor their health every day, and take everyday precautions including washing their hands often with soap and water, especially after they cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective. If they become ill, they should notify their supervisor and stay home. Those who have an underlying medical condition or who are pregnant should call their health care provider for advice, because they might need to receive influenza antiviral drugs to prevent illness.

ARE THERE MEDICINES TO TREAT NOVEL H1N1 INFECTION?

Yes, CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or Zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with novel H1N1 flu virus. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications.

HOW LONG CAN INFLUENZA VIRUS REMAIN VIABLE ON OBJECTS (SUCH AS BOOKS AND DOORKNOBS)?

Studies have shown that influenza virus can survive on environmental surfaces and can infect a person for up to 2-8 hours after being deposited on the surface

WHAT KILLS INFLUENZA VIRUS?

Influenza virus is destroyed by heat (167-212°F). In addition, several chemical germicides, including chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, detergents (soap), iodophors (iodine-based antiseptics), and alcohols are effective against human influenza viruses if used in proper concentration for a sufficient length of time.

For example, wipes or gels with alcohol in them can be used to clean hands. The gels should be rubbed into hands until they are dry.

WHAT HOUSEHOLD CLEANING SHOULD BE DONE TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF INFLUENZA VIRUS?

To prevent the spread of influenza virus it is important to keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, kitchen counters and toys for children" clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE H1N1?

If you become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people. Staying at home means that you should not leave your home except to seek medical care. This means avoiding normal activities, including work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings.

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

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness

- Confusion

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- Severe or persistent vomiting

- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Persons should stay away from school or work until at least 24 hours after their fever is gone (without using any fever reducing medication).

This is an extremely important public health measure that will help limit the spread of the novel H1N1 virus to others.



FOR MEDIA INQUIRES, CONTACT:

Safety Officers: Debra Thompson &

Sharvn Chino,

155 Indian Avenue

Lawrence, Ks 66046

dthomposn@haskell.edu

schino@haskell.edu

785-749-8467

Residential Housing:

Jim Tucker

155 Indian Avenue

Lawrence, Ks 66046

jtucker@haskell.edu

785-749-8460

785-830-2703