

## 2009 H1N1 Influenza Update

Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, September 2009

**Q: *What is the current status of 2009 H1N1 Influenza?***

A: The 2009 H1N1 flu continues to circulate. We have seen an increase of cases with the beginning of the school year. Most cases to date in the U.S. have been among persons 5 to 24 years old. Most people get better without seeing a doctor; however, there are some who experience complications.

**Q: *Who is at increased risk of complications from the 2009 H1N1 virus?***

A: Pregnant women, children less than 5 years old; persons whose immune systems are compromised; persons with underlying medical conditions (such as diabetes, chronic lung disease, and heart disease); and children with neurodevelopmental conditions have a higher risk of complications. People 65 years and older are at increased risk from influenza but so far have been less affected by this novel flu virus.

**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 flu vaccines for everyone over the age of 6 months: one against the seasonal flu strains, available now, the other to protect persons from the 2009 H1N1 flu, expected to be available mid-October. The CDC recommends that certain groups of the population receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine when it first becomes available. They include:

- pregnant women
- people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- healthcare and emergency medical services personnel
- persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old
- people ages of 25 through 64 years of age with chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

As vaccine supply increases and demand among priority groups is met, the CDC recommends that other adults receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine.

**Q: *How many doses of vaccine will I need?***

A: Healthy individuals ages 10 and older will need one dose of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine. Clinical trials are still being conducted on children under 10 years of age to determine whether an additional dose is needed, but it is likely that two doses will be needed for them.

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

A: If you have flu symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue sometimes with vomiting and/or diarrhea):

- **Call the doctor.** He/she will let you know whether you need to be seen and/or whether you need medication.
- **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.

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

(continued)

**LET'S ALL GET READY!**

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT OUR COMMUNITY IS DOING

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(continued)

**Q:** *I'm at-risk for flu complications. What if I have flu symptoms?*

**A:** Call the doctor to discuss whether you need to be seen and/or need medication for flu symptoms if you are pregnant, have an underlying medical condition, have a compromised immune system or are older than 65. If your child has flu symptoms and is younger than five years *or* has a neurodevelopmental condition, call your child's doctor.

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

**A:** Seek medical attention immediately for any 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:** *When should I seek 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

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

**A:** Basic hygiene can help stop the spread of 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.
- You can use alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Put a dollop on the palm; rub all over hands until they are dry.
- Stay home when sick.

**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).