
Flu: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS about H1N1 Swine Flu & Seasonal Flu



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What is the flu?

The flu is a common infectious disease caused by an influenza (flu) virus. The flu usually affects a person's breathing system. Every year from 5 to 20% of people get the flu. People who get the flu usually get it during the fall or winter- that is why it is called seasonal flu.

What is H1N1 swine flu?

H1N1 swine flu is a new influenza (flu) virus that was found in April 2009.

How does the flu spread?

Both seasonal flu and H1N1 swine flu spread through tiny wet drops produced when a person coughs, sneezes, or talks. A person without the flu can get it by breathing in these wet drops, or by touching items and surfaces covered with these drops and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes.

When can someone spread the flu to others?

People who have seasonal flu or H1N1 swine flu may be able to spread it to others about 1 day before getting sick to 5 - 7 days after. Children and people with weak immune systems can spread the H1N1 swine flu virus longer. However, people are most contagious during the first 3 days of illness.

How can I protect myself from the flu?

Use healthy habits:

- Get vaccinated for seasonal flu and H1N1 swine flu
- Wash hands often with soap or water or use alcohol-based hand rub
- Cover mouths and noses with a tissue (or shirt sleeve) when sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing
- Don't share personal items like toothbrushes or drinks
- Clean frequently touched items and surfaces with soap and water

Is there a vaccine?

Yes. It is important for everyone to get a seasonal flu shot and an H1N1 swine flu shot this fall and winter. Vaccine is in short supply and is slowly becoming available. Please contact your provider for the latest updates on where you can get the vaccine.

Do I need to wear a mask?

People who feel well do not need to wear a mask. People who feel sick may be asked by their doctor to wear a mask while in the doctor's office or clinic. People who are sick may choose to wear a mask when around others.

What are signs and symptoms of the flu?

The usual signs and symptoms of both seasonal and H1N1 swine flu are cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, and feeling very tired. Most people also have a fever. Others may throw-up and have diarrhea.

Is it a cold or the flu?

In general, the flu is worse than the common cold. Colds are usually milder than the flu.

Symptom	Flu	Cold
Fever	Usually 102 degrees F, but can go up to 104 degrees F and usually lasts 3 to 4 days.	Rare in adults and older children, but can be as high as 102 degrees F in infants and small children.
Headache	Sudden onset and can be severe	Rare
Muscle Aches	Usually, and often severe	None or mild
Tiredness and Weakness	Can last 2 or more weeks	Mild
Extreme Exhaustion	Sudden onset and can be severe	Never
Runny Nose	Sometimes	Often
Sneezing	Sometimes	Often
Sore Throat	Sometimes	Often
Cough	Usually, and can become severe	Mild to moderate

How serious is the flu?

Both seasonal and H1N1 swine flu do not usually cause serious problems. Occasionally they can cause severe disease. Some people have been hospitalized and a small number of people have died. Historically, seasonal flu causes about 36,000 deaths in the United States each year.

Who is more likely to get very sick with the flu?

The list of “high-risk” people is similar for H1N1 swine flu and for seasonal flu:

- People with lung disease like asthma
- People with other medical conditions like diabetes, heart disease, kidney or liver disease, blood cell disease including sickle cell, or neurological disease that affects swallowing or breathing
- Pregnant women and women who have given birth within 2 weeks
- Children age 2 years and under
- Adults age 65 years and over
- People with weak immune systems (due to disease or medicines)

**CHECK FOR UPDATED
H1N1 SWINE FLU INFORMATION**

www.sfcddcp.org/flu
or

in San Francisco call 311