



Iowa Department of Public Health

Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Fact Sheet

For Community Colleges, Colleges, and Universities

What are the symptoms of novel flu?

The symptoms of novel H1N1 flu virus in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include **fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills** and **fatigue**. A significant number of people who have been infected with novel H1N1 flu virus have reported having the additional symptoms of diarrhea and vomiting.

Who is at most risk for being infected with novel H1N1 flu?

- people aged 5-24

Who is at highest risk for having complications from the novel H1N1 flu?

- children younger than 4 years of age
- pregnant women
- people of any age with chronic medical conditions (such as heart, lung, kidney disease) **or** who are immunosuppressed (e.g., taking immunosuppressive medications, infected with HIV)

How does novel flu spread?

The current novel influenza virus spreads the same way as seasonal flu. Flu viruses are spread by an ill person coughing or sneezing on or near another person. Sometimes people can become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it (such as a door knob) with their hand and then touching their mouth or nose.

What should I do if I become sick with influenza?

If you are sick, you should stay home and keep away from others as much as possible. This includes avoiding travel and not going to work or school. You should stay away from other until at least **24 hours** after your fever is gone. (Your fever should be gone without having to use fever-reducing medicine.) If you need to travel for medical care or other emergencies, make sure you cover your mouth and nose, and keep your hands clean while traveling. Most people will recover without needing medical care. If you have severe illness or you are at high risk for flu complications, contact your health care provider or seek medical care.

What should I do if I live with someone who is sick with influenza?

- Keep the sick person away from other people as much as possible, especially others who are at high risk for complications from influenza. If possible, keep the sick person in a room separate from the common areas of the house, apartment or dormitory.
- Remind the sick person to cover their coughs and sneezes, and clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often, especially after coughing and/or sneezing
- If you are in a high risk group for complications from influenza, you should attempt to avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with those who are sick with influenza. Infants should not be cared for by those who are ill.

Quick Facts for protecting yourself and others against the flu

- Avoid contact with sick people. If you must have contact, keep at least 6 feet between you and the sick person.
- Always cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If no tissue is available, cough or sneeze into your sleeve or elbow. Do not cough into your hand.
- Regularly and especially after coughing or sneezing, wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with your hands. Germs spread this way.
- If you are sick with a flu-like illness, do not go to work, school, or travel. Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or other emergencies. (Your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.)