



Health Connect

Leading the way to a healthier Shawnee County

H1N1 and Pregnancy: Frequently Asked Questions

Does a pregnant woman have a greater chance of getting H1N1?

Research from previous pandemics and seasonal flu show that pregnant women are more likely to get more severely ill than other people.

What can I do to avoid getting sick?

You can avoid crowded settings in communities having outbreaks of the flu, wash hands frequently with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if water is unavailable. You should also minimize close contact with sick individuals and obtain the H1N1 vaccine when it is available.

What are the symptoms of H1N1?

Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, chills, fatigue and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting.

If a pregnant woman has flu like symptoms, what should they do?

If you are sick you should call your doctor's office immediately. They will determine the appropriate actions to take at that time. Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or your sleeve.

How is H1N1 treated?

In some cases antiviral drugs are used to treat H1N1. These work best when taken within the first 48 hours from the start of symptoms. If you have a fever, you should take acetaminophen to reduce it. High fever has been associated with some fetal defects. As with any flu, you should drink plenty of water and get lots of rest.

If a mother contracts H1N1 are there any effects to the unborn baby?

The unborn baby is not affected by the virus. However, the virus can make the mother very sick and in turn may cause the baby problems.

Is it OK to take antiviral medication while pregnant?

Yes, it is OK to take antiviral medication. No side effects have been reported in pregnant women who have used the drugs.

Is it OK to continue to breast-feed if a woman contracts H1N1?

Keep breastfeeding the baby. Breast milk passes on antibodies from the mother to the baby, which helps fight infection. Be careful not to cough or sneeze on the baby's face. You should wash your hands often. If you become too sick to breastfeed, you might consider pumping your milk and have someone else feed the baby the expressed milk.

Is it OK to breastfeed while taking antiviral medication?

Yes, a mother can breastfeed while being treated for flu.