

What is H1N1 and how does it spread?

H1N1 flu is a respiratory disease caused by a new virus. It spreads easily among humans, especially the young. No one, except those who have been infected, is immune.

Flu viruses spread through droplets that come from your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze. These tiny particles can be inhaled or transferred to others from surfaces such as TV remotes, doorknobs, telephones, toys and countertops.

Like seasonal flu, H1N1 flu symptoms can vary from mild to severe. Public health experts are concerned that the H1N1 virus may change (mutate) and become more severe over time.

Some individuals, including pregnant women and those with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease, may be at greater risk for developing a severe illness from H1N1 flu. Pregnant women and those with chronic medical conditions should contact their health care provider immediately when they have flu-like symptoms.

H1N1 flu symptoms include:

Fever greater than 100 degree F.
Cough, sore throat, runny nose.
Aches, chills, fatigue.
In some cases, diarrhea and vomiting.

Credible Information

Sources for accurate information include:

Local health department www.snco.us/ha

Kansas Department of Health and Environment www.kdheks.gov

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/



Shawnee County Health Agency
1615 SW 8th Ave.
Topeka, KS 66606
(785) 368-2000
www.snco.us/ha

Leading the way to a healthier Shawnee County

If you have questions,
please email them to EPCO@snco.us



Kansas Department of
Health and Environment
Curtis State Office Building
1000 SW Jackson St, Suite 300
Topeka, KS 66612
(785) 296-1086

H1N1: A Guide for Individuals and Families

Caring for Someone at Home

Caring for someone with flu

Someone who is sick with flu should get plenty of rest and drink plenty of fluids.

Keep sick individuals away from others:

If possible, set up a sick room and designate a separate bathroom for those with flu. Both rooms should have windows that open to circulate fresh air and a door that closes. Keep the door closed as much as possible.

Designate one adult in the home to take care of a sick person. Avoid letting a pregnant woman care for a sick person. Pregnant women are at increased risk of severe flu and flu related complications.

Other than caregivers, the sick person should not have visitors.

If possible, the sick person should wear a surgical or protective mask anytime a caregiver enters the room.

Relieving the symptoms of flu

Some people who have severe illness can benefit from antiviral drugs. Most people can get better with rest, fluids and over-the-counter, fever-reducing medicines.

Treat fevers and aches with acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®).

WARNING: Do NOT give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to children or teenagers who have the flu. This can cause a rare but serious illness called Reyes Syndrome.

Over-the-counter cold and flu medications used according to the package instructions, may help relieve some symptoms, such as cough and congestion.

Check the ingredients on the package label to see if the medication already contains acetaminophen or ibuprofen before taking additional doses of these medications. Don't double dose!

Do not give children younger than 4 years of age over-the-counter cold medications without first speaking with a health care provider.

The safest care for flu symptoms in children younger than 2 years of age is using a cool-mist humidifier and a suction bulb to help clear away mucus.

Stock up on supplies

It is important for your family to be prepared by stocking up on the following items:

Prescription medications and over-the-counter drugs.

Necessary medical supplies for chronic health conditions like diabetes.

Medicines for fever.

Fever thermometer

Fluids to reduce the risk of dehydration, for example sports drinks for adults and teens, and Pedialyte® or other generic electrolyte solution for children.

Cleaning supplies, tissues, toilet paper and disposable diapers.

Cell phone with charger.

Protecting yourself at home

Clean your hands frequently with soap and running water. Use an alcohol-based hand rub when soap and water are not available. Encourage everyone in the household to do the same. It is important to wash hands after coughing or sneezing, caring for a sick person or after touching something a sick person has come in contact with.

Use paper towels for drying hands after hand washing or use individual cloth towels for each member of the household (for example, have a different colored towel for each person).

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Cough into your sleeve if a tissue isn't handy. Encourage everyone in the household to do the same.

Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by the sick person in a trash container. Wash your hands after touching used tissues and similar waste.

Keep surfaces clean. Clean frequently touched surfaces like bedside tables, countertops, bathroom fixtures and shared items like toys and TV remotes daily and when visibly soiled.

Do not share linens, eating utensils and dishes.

Emergency medical care

Get medical care right away if you or a family member:

Has difficulty breathing or chest pain

Has purple or blue discoloration of the lips

Is vomiting and unable to keep liquids down

Has signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination or in infants lack of tears when crying

Has seizures, is less responsive than normal or becomes confused.