

## **H1N1 Swine Influenza (Flu)**

*Updated August 24, 2009*

The human swine flu outbreak caused by novel influenza (H1N1) virus continues to cause illness, hospitalization, and death in the U.S during the normally flu-free summer months. Because H1N1 is a new virus, many people may have little or no immunity against it. Therefore, CDC anticipates that the number of H1N1 flu cases will continue to grow and could cause significant illness in the upcoming fall and winter during the U.S. influenza season.

Though swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is susceptible to the prescription antiviral drugs oseltamivir and zanamivir, vaccines (immunizations) are the best tool we have to prevent influenza. The seasonal flu vaccine prepared for fall/winter 2009 is unlikely to protect against novel H1N1 influenza. However, a novel H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and may be ready for the public in mid-October. After meeting on July 29, the CDC issued guidelines for flu immunizations. CDC recommends that the public receive the seasonal flu vaccine **as soon as it becomes available**. In addition, as of August 2009, CDC recommends novel H1N1 vaccine for the following at-risk populations:

- Pregnant women
- Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age
- Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel
- All people from 6 months through 24 years of age (a population in which many cases have been reported and who live in close proximity)
- Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza

### **What You Can Do to Stay Healthy**

There are everyday actions people can take to stay healthy:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people. If you are sick with a flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school until you are fever-free for 24 hours; also, limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

The CDC recommendations for and information about H1N1 vaccine is likely to change as the fall season begins. For the latest updates, visit : <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

World Health Organization (WHO) Disease Outbreak News:  
<http://www.who.int/csr/don/en/>