

## Resources

<sup>1</sup>Swine flu: preventing spread in the home and community. International Scientific Forum on Home Hygiene. April 2009. Downloaded from <http://www.ifh-homehygiene.org> on July 24, 2009.

<sup>2</sup>H1N1 Fact Sheet For Cleaning Professionals. Downloaded from <http://www.cleanlink.com/cp/article/H1N1-Fact-Sheet-For-Cleaning-Professionals--10915> on July 24, 2009.

<sup>3</sup>[http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance\\_homecare.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm). Downloaded on August 10, 2009.

<sup>4</sup>[http://www.avma.org/public\\_health/influenza/new\\_virus/new\\_flu\\_virus\\_faq.asp](http://www.avma.org/public_health/influenza/new_virus/new_flu_virus_faq.asp). Downloaded on August 10, 2009.

Specific information about household detergents and disinfectants can be obtained from the IFH document: <http://www.ifh-homehygiene.org/IntegratedCRD.nsf/6de8f3a205ad765a8025754b00090a07/6d5344548d5863fd802575490042607e?OpenDocument>.

Updates on swine flu are regularly posted on the Centers for Disease Control website ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)).



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### *Center for Hygiene & Health in the Home and Community*

Swine flu is a new version of the H1N1 strain of influenza type A. It is considered highly contagious and spreads from person to person most likely in a couple of different ways: when an ill person sneezes or coughs, the infected droplets can enter another person through the nose, mouth, or eyes; or the droplets can land on a contact surface (e.g. a doorknob) that is then touched by another person who then puts his/her hand up to their face.<sup>1</sup> Because swine flu is a new version of the virus, most people do not have immunity and may become ill or even die.

A new H1N1 flu vaccine is currently being tested and should be available in Fall '09, although the initial supply of the vaccine may be limited for the general population. This brochure will review the current recommendations to clean your home to reduce contamination in the event of an outbreak of H1N1 or seasonal flu.

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## Cleaning to Reduce the Risk of H1N1 Flu Virus At Home



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## Preventing H1N1 from Entering the Home

Simple hygiene precautions can be taken to help prevent anyone in your household from becoming ill with H1N1 influenza:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, especially when returning home from a public area: work, school, grocery store, restaurant, library, etc. For proper hand washing technique, consult the brochure [Proper Hand Washing](#).
- If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer containing at least 62% alcohol.
- Anyone who has been in contact with a sick person should change clothing and wash their hands once home.



## Preventing H1N1 Cross contamination

From the H1N1 outbreak in the Spring, the CDC has concluded that **otherwise healthy** individuals who had been ill may return to work or school after 24 hours with no fever or signs of a fever when not taking fever-reducing medication.<sup>3</sup> However, because the symptoms of H1N1 are similar to any other flu illness, anyone with H1N1 or flu-like symptoms should prevent contamination of the home and household members while recovering:

- Sneeze or cough into a disposable tissue and discard it immediately in a wastebasket. In the absence of a tissue, sneeze or cough into your elbow, not your hands.

- The sick person should have a separate bedroom and bathroom, if possible, and keep the door closed.
- If ill with H1N1, wear a facemask when sharing common spaces with other household members, especially if there are vulnerable persons at home: e.g. pregnant women, infants, elderly people.
- Designate a well person to prepare meals for the family.
- If sick, wash your hands before touching common-use objects: remote controls, light switches, doorknobs.
- Perform any respiratory treatments (such as nebulizer treatments) in the sick room with the door closed.

## Cleaning Guidelines

The H1N1 flu virus is effectively killed by bleach-based products or EPA registered disinfectants or cleaning/disinfectant products with *demonstrated (proven) viral kill* claims against flu viruses. However, flu viruses, including H1N1, can survive 8-12 hours on paper or cloth, 24-48 hours on nonporous surfaces like doorknobs or desks, and up to 72 hours on wet surfaces<sup>2</sup> such as towels; therefore careful cleaning **and** disinfection is recommended:

- Clean any soiled surface with detergent and water before applying a disinfectant or apply a combined disinfectant-cleaning product.
- Consult the disinfectant label for effectiveness against influenza viruses. If unsure, prepare a solution of 1 part household bleach for 10 parts water. Some bleach or other cleaning products (e.g. in spray form) may not require dilution and can be used “neat”. Regardless, always check the product’s label for use, dilution instructions, and cautions.<sup>1</sup>
- Wear appropriate protective equipment: gloves and splash protection<sup>2</sup> (a face mask to prevent droplets containing flu virus from entering the eyes, nose, or mouth) when cleaning the sick room. Face masks approved by FDA as “medical devices” or

N95 respirators are recommended by the CDC.

- Clean surfaces that are touched by the hands or face frequently: light switches, remote controls, doorknobs, telephones, faucet handles, keyboards.
- Clean all toys handled by an ill child. Most soft toys can be laundered and many plastic toys can be cleaned in the dishwasher. Check the label for cleaning instructions.
- Place an alcohol-based hand sanitizer near every sink.
- Use paper towels to dry hands, or designate a separate cloth towel for each person (use different colored towels).<sup>3</sup>
- Clean and disinfect the bathroom used by the sick person daily.<sup>3</sup>
- Provide good ventilation in common areas (e.g. by opening windows).<sup>3</sup>
- Dirty dishes and utensils can all be cleaned together (preferably in the dishwasher where heat will disinfect), but should never be shared if soiled.<sup>3</sup>
- Linen and clothes for the ill person can be washed with the other laundry. Dry the bedsheets and towels on the hot setting and wash your hands after handling dirty laundry.<sup>3</sup>
- If you use a cleaning service, inform them of the illness in the household. Preferably, avoid contaminating others by cleaning the home yourself.

## Final Notes

No H1N1 swine flu cases have been reported in household pets. However, the virus may mutate and become infectious to certain animals. Therefore it is best to keep pets away from sick household members and wash your hands before and after handling pets.<sup>4</sup> Also, remember to clean and disinfect car interiors that sick family members have used.

