

2009 H1N1 INFLUENZA (SWINE FLU) (Child)

The 2009 H1N1 influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease caused by the influenza A (H1N1) strain of viruses. Scientists originally thought the virus came from pigs (swine). But it is now known that this is not the case. This germ is a new virus. Like any flu, the 2009 H1N1 flu is highly contagious. It spreads from person to person through droplets that form when an infected person coughs, sneezes, laughs, or talks. The virus can also live for hours on surfaces. A person can become infected by touching a contaminated surface then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth.

2009 H1N1 flu symptoms are about the same as regular flu symptoms. These include fever and chills, headache, body and muscle aches, dry cough, runny nose, and weakness. The child may also have sore throat, diarrhea, or vomiting.

There is no way to know for sure in the emergency department whether a child has 2009 H1N1 or another type of flu. A rapid influenza test can show if a flu virus is present. A confirming test is then done to tell whether the child has 2009 H1N1. Results of this test take a few days. You will be notified when the test results come back. In the meantime, follow the instructions you are given, including the measures below.

HOME CARE**Medications:**

- If the 2009 H1N1 flu is in your area and the child's symptoms are severe, the doctor may prescribe medications called antivirals. These must be taken within 2 days of when the symptoms started. Antivirals work by stopping the virus from reproducing in the body. This gives the body's immune system a chance to fight the virus. After taking the medication, the child's symptoms may be milder and he or she may recover quicker than without the medication. The medication may also prevent serious complications such as pneumonia. Mild side effects from these drugs occasionally occur (the chance of side effects is 5 to 10%). Serious side effects are rare. The doctor will decide if this medication is needed. Follow your doctor's instructions for giving these medications to your child. Give ALL the medication as prescribed until it is gone.
- If the child's symptoms are mild or it has been more than 2 days since the symptoms started, the doctor will likely not prescribe antiviral medications.
- Antibiotics are NOT helpful against influenza.
- **FEVER AND PAIN:** Give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) to control pain and fever, unless another medication was prescribed. In infants over six months of age, you may use ibuprofen (such as Children's Motrin) instead of acetaminophen. Note: Do not give aspirin to a child under 18 years old who is ill with a fever. It may lead to a rare but serious illness that causes liver damage.
- **COUGH:** Do not give over-the-counter cough and cold medications to any child under 6 years old unless your doctor has specifically told you to do so. These medications have not been proven to be effective in young children, and may have harmful effects in children under 6 years.
- A vaccine against 2009 H1N1 flu is available. Talk to your child's doctor about whether this vaccine is right for your child.

General Care:

- Give your child plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. For infants under 1 year old, continue regular feedings (breast or formula). Between feedings, you can give oral rehydration solution (such as Pedialyte, Infalyte, or Rehydralyte). These are available from grocery and drug stores without a prescription. For

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children over 1 year old, give plenty of fluids like water, juice, ginger ale, and warm soup.

- Have your child sleep and rest quietly as much as possible.

Preventing Infection:

To help prevent the virus from spreading to yourself or others, follow these steps:

- Wash your hands often. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth as much as possible. Instruct family members to do the same.
- If soap and water isn't available, hands can be cleaned with an alcohol-based hand gel containing at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Teach your child to wash his or her hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Have your child cough or sneeze into a tissue. Then throw the tissue away and wash your hands. Teach an older child who doesn't have a tissue to cough or sneeze into the crook of the elbow.
- Keep your child home for at least 24 hours after he or she no longer has a fever or fever symptoms (such as chills). Be sure that the fever isn't being hidden by fever-reducing medications (such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen).
- Don't allow your child to share food, utensils, drinking glasses, or a toothbrush with others.
- Ask your doctor whether you or others in your household should receive antiviral medication to help avoid infection.

FOLLOW UP with your doctor or as directed by our staff if your child is not improving over the next week. You will be told how to get results of any testing.

NOTE: 2009 H1N1 flu is not caused by eating pork or pork products. Eating pork or pork products that have been properly handled and cooked is safe. To learn more about 2009 H1N1 flu, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm

GET PROMPT MEDICAL ATTENTION if any of the following occur:

- Symptoms get better, then return with a fever and cough that is worse
- Fever rises over 100°F (37.7°C)
- Fever with a rash
- Trouble breathing or fast breathing
- Blue skin or lips
- Coughing up green or yellow mucus or bloody mucus
- Severe headache, face, neck or ear pain
- Extreme sleepiness or not interacting
- In infants, not wanting to be held
- Refusal to feed or drink fluids
- Severe or repeated vomiting or inability to keep fluids down

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