

# Novel Influenza A H1N1

**Novel Influenza A H1N1** is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses. Outbreaks of H1N1 happen regularly in pigs. People do not normally get H1N1, but human infections can and do happen. Most commonly, human cases of H1N1 happen in people who are around pigs, but it's possible for H1N1 viruses to spread from person to person also.

## What are the symptoms of H1N1?

Symptoms include **fever (100°F or higher) and 1 or more of the following:**

**○ cough   ○ sore throat   ○ runny nose   ○ nasal congestion**

Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with H1N1. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with H1N1 infection in people.

Like seasonal flu, H1N1 may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions. The incubation period (time from exposure to onset of symptoms) is 2-4 days. Most people are contagious for about 7 days; however some persons, especially children, can shed the virus for 10 days or longer.

## How can you become infected with H1N1?

- Through contact with infected pigs or environments contaminated with H1N1 viruses.
- Through contact with a person infected with H1N1. H1N1 is thought to be spread the same way as seasonal flu; mainly from person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of the infected person.

## How can you prevent H1N1?

There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- **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 hand cleaners are also effective.
- **Try to avoid close contact** with sick people. If you get sick with influenza, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.

**How can you be treated for H1N1?** CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with these swine influenza viruses. Anti-viral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, anti-viral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. For treatment, anti-viral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within 2 days of symptoms).