

Seasonal and H1N1 Flu Pandemic Preparedness



There are three kinds of influenzas – Type A, B and C – with Type A being the most virulent. The common flu is a combination of A and B, with Type A causing the illness we typically call the flu. H1N1, also a Type A, is a new influenza virus that has never before circulated among humans and is causing a global outbreak because we likely have no natural immunity to it. H1N1 can spread quickly and easily among the population.

Tip

Using anti-viral tissues helps prevent the spread of viruses. No tissue? Sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands. You'll be less likely to pass germs along.



In fact, on June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) signaled that a pandemic of 2009 H1N1 flu was under way. It's important that you take precautions against its spread, recognize the symptoms and know what to do if you become sick.

Transmission

Spread of H1N1 virus is thought to occur in the same way that seasonal flu spreads — mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something — such as a surface or object — with flu viruses on it and then touching their eyes, mouth or nose.

Symptoms

The symptoms of H1N1 flu virus in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu, including:

- Sudden fever
- Muscle aches
- Headache
- Lack of energy
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Chills and extreme fatigue
- Fever and body aches lasting three - five days
- Cough and lack of energy lasting up to two weeks or more
- Vomiting and diarrhea

Treatment

The flu is caused by a virus, so the most common treatment is rest, drinking plenty of fluids and taking over-the-counter anti-cough and anti-fever medications (avoid aspirin) to treat the symptoms.

Consult your healthcare professional for any specific medications or additional treatments.

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Tip

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps to take to avoid getting sick. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing “Happy Birthday” twice through to a friend!



Prevention

To reduce your chances of getting the flu, the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends receiving the seasonal flu vaccine as early as possible. In addition, get the H1N1 vaccine as soon as it is available because the seasonal flu vaccine is NOT expected to protect against the H1N1 flu.

Check with your healthcare provider to see if this is the best course of action for you.

Who should receive the H1N1 vaccine?

CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has recommended that certain groups of the population receive the H1N1 vaccine when it first becomes available. These target groups include pregnant women, people who live with or care for children younger than six months of age, healthcare and emergency medical services personnel, persons between the ages of six months and 24 years, and people 25 through 64 years of age who are at higher risk for H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

Who should receive the seasonal flu vaccine?

We are strongly encouraging all of our employees to get the seasonal flu vaccine. Also people at higher risk of serious complications from seasonal flu should be sure to get the vaccine. This includes people age 65 years and older, children younger than five years, pregnant women, people of any age with chronic medical conditions (such as, asthma, diabetes or heart disease) and people who are immunosuppressed (e.g., taking immunosuppressive medications, infected with HIV).

Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

By following a few common sense protective measures, you can help to reduce your chances of becoming ill.

- Pay attention to good hygiene, especially frequent hand washing.
- Cover your mouth and nose during a sneeze or cough; sneeze or cough into your elbow or a disposable tissue.
Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after a sneeze or cough. Alcohol-based cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.

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Prevention *continued*

- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoid crowds and use other social-distancing measures.
- Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home; a supply of over-the-counter medicines, alcohol-based hand wipes, tissues and other related items might be useful and will help avoid the need to make trips out in public while you are sick and contagious.
- Maintain an arms-length distance from someone who is sick (generally three feet is a sufficient separation provided there are no unguarded sneezes/coughs).
- Clean/disinfect objects and shared surfaces, which may be contaminated with the virus.
- Wash hands before and after handling any food products.

In areas with confirmed human cases of H1N1:

The risk for infection can be reduced through a combination of actions in areas with confirmed human cases of H1N1. No single action will provide complete protection, but an approach combining the following steps can help decrease the likelihood of transmission:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand cleaner when soap and water are not available.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- People who are sick with an influenza-like illness (fever plus at least cough or sore throat and possibly other symptoms like runny nose, body aches, headaches, chills, fatigue, vomiting and diarrhea) should stay home. Stay away from others as much as possible, including avoiding travel, for at least 24 hours after fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- Avoid close contact (i.e., being within about three feet) with persons with influenza-like illnesses.

Hand Washing

As USF associates, we understand how critical hand washing is to safe food handling. In addition, hand washing is a critical step we can take in light of the H1N1 virus.

Washing your hands is especially important:

- Before, during and after you prepare food
- Before and after you eat, and use the bathroom
- After handling animals or animal waste
- When your hands are dirty
- More frequently when someone in your home is sick

The correct way to wash your hands:

- Use a clean towel when turning the faucet on or off.
- First wet your hands and apply liquid or clean bar soap. Place the bar soap on a rack and allow it to drain.
- Next rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue for 10 -15 seconds or about the length of a little tune. It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs.

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Prevention *continued*

- Rinse well and dry your hands.
- When exiting the restroom, use a towel to open the door.
- Alcohol-based cleaners are an option to protect against the spread of germs if soap and water are not available. When using a waterless cleaner make sure to apply the product to the palm of one hand, rub hands together thoroughly to cover all surfaces of the hands and fingers, and allow it to air dry; do not wipe it off.

Avoiding Infected Areas

Most germs are spread by hand-to-hand contact and shared surfaces. The most common shared surfaces are restrooms, door handles and elevators. Since not everyone practices good hand-washing techniques, one way to help protect yourself further is to be creative when using the restroom, elevator or doors.

- When it comes to entering the restroom: Make like a surgeon — turn your back to the door and press in backwards.
- Use an elbow to press the elevator call button.
- Use your knuckle to push the buttons on the copier or fax machine.
- Use your forearm to push revolving doors.
- Use a barrier (towel) to turn door knobs or grasp hand rails.
- Frequently clean shared surfaces like desk tops, keyboards, phone, etc.

Clean and disinfect any shared surface or equipment:

- Keyboards, phones, desks, computers, mouse, fax/copiers, door knobs, etc.
- Steering wheels/vehicle door knobs — disinfect with alcohol wipes before touching surface or wear gloves.

Match the cleaner with the surface:

- Alcohol or baby wipes on vertical and odd-shaped surfaces (phones, push plates, light switches, fax/copiers, computer keys/mouse, etc.)
- Cleaner (such as, Windex® or Spectrasol) on horizontal surfaces; allow liquid to pool on desk tops or tables.
- Increased cleaner contact time helps!

USF Pandemic Preparation

In the event an H1N1 flu spreads and impacts the well-being of the workforce and/or business continuity, U.S. Foodservice has in place an emergency response plan to minimize risk to our employees, suppliers and customers. The key elements include:

- A clear and concise operations plan of action based on how the pandemic develops at a local, regional or national level
- Education and training for employees, suppliers and customers

Non-Employee Screening:

Each division/location has procedures for its non-U.S. Foodservice personnel.

Communication:

- Visit the USF website at: www.usfoodservice.com
- Check with your local USF division
- USF employees: call your local division emergency number for updates

Note: Much of the information in this document is based on studies and past experience with seasonal (human) influenza. CDC believes the information applies to H1N1 (swine) viruses as well, but studies on this virus are ongoing to learn more about its characteristics. This document will be updated as new information becomes available.