

TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC
THROUGH PROMOTING
INDIVIDUAL, COMMUNITY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Prepare Today

Know the Difference

SEASONAL FLU- A contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza (flu) viruses occurring every year. It affects an average of 5 percent to 20 percent of the U.S. population by causing mild to severe illness, and in some instances can lead to death. This flu is more severe in people ages 65 years and older.

H1N1 INFLUENZA- Commonly known as swine flu, novel influenza A (H1N1) is a new flu virus of swine origin that first caused illness in Mexico and the United States in March and April, 2009. It's thought that novel influenza A (H1N1) flu spreads in the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. 2009 H1N1 has caused greater disease burden in people younger than 25 years of age; about one-third of adults older than 60 may have antibodies against this virus.

AVIAN INFLUENZA- Commonly known as bird flu, influenza A (H5N1) virus – also called “H5N1 virus” – is an influenza A virus subtype that occurs mainly in birds, is highly contagious among birds, and can be deadly to them. H5N1 virus does not usually infect people, but infections with these viruses have occurred in humans. Most of these cases have resulted from people having direct or close contact with H5N1-infected poultry or H5N1-contaminated surfaces.

PANDEMIC- An outbreak of a disease that affects large numbers of people throughout the world and spreads rapidly.



Influenza Preparation

09-10 Season: What to Expect **P.1**

Prevention & Symptoms **P.2**

What to Prepare For **P.3**

Vaccination Information **P.4**

2009-10 Influenza (Flu) Season

What sort of flu season is expected this year?

Flu seasons are unpredictable in a number of ways, including the timing of the beginning, severity, and length of the flu season.

This flu season (2009-2010), there are more uncertainties than usual because of the emergence of a new 2009 H1N1 influenza virus (previously called "novel H1N1" or "swine flu") that has caused the first influenza pandemic (global outbreak of disease) in more than 40 years.

Severity is uncertain. Many people do not have immune protection against this new and very different 2009 H1N1 virus, which has spread worldwide quickly. Scientists believe the 2009 H1N1 virus – along with regular seasonal viruses – will cause illness, hospital stays, and deaths this flu season in the United States. There is concern that the 2009 H1N1 virus may cause the season to be worse than a regular flu season – with a lot more people getting sick, being hospitalized and dying than during a regular flu seasonal.

Timing is uncertain. In past years, seasonal flu activity typically did not reach its peak in the U.S. until January or February, but flu activity has occurred as late as May. However, the 2009 H1N1 virus caused illness, hospitalizations, and deaths in the U.S. during the summer months when influenza is very uncommon. So it is not known when flu activity will increase, when it will be most intense (peak), what viruses will circulate, or how long the season might last.

What is “seasonal flu” and how is it different than “H1N1 flu”?

Season flu is a group of viruses established in the human population that change (mutate) year to year and causes human illness mostly in the winter season. Because they change, it is necessary to receive a seasonal flu vaccination every year.

H1N1 flu is an influenza virus that has changed from an animal origin to a virus that now infects humans. It contains genetic information that most humans have never been exposed to. This creates the potential for an illness that spreads more rapidly and causes worse symptoms than seasonal flu.

What actions can I take to protect myself and my family against both seasonal & 2009 H1N1 flu this year?

CDC recommends a yearly seasonal [flu vaccine](#) as the first and most important step in protecting against seasonal flu. While there are many different flu viruses, the seasonal flu vaccine protects against the three main seasonal flu strains that research indicates will cause the most illness during the flu season. The seasonal flu vaccine can protect you from getting sick from these three viruses or it can make your illness milder if you get a related flu virus. The seasonal flu vaccine will not provide protection against the new H1N1 influenza. However a [2009 H1N1 vaccine](#) is currently being distributed. The 2009 H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine – it is intended to be used along-side seasonal flu vaccine.

In addition, 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. If soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and 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.



Do I Have the Flu? **Common Signs and Symptoms of Influenza**

Be aware of common flu symptoms:

- High fever
- Severe body aches
- Headaches
- Extreme tiredness
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Vomiting and /or diarrhea (*more common in children than in adults*)

NOTE: *Having all of these symptoms doesn't always mean that you have the flu. Many different illnesses have similar symptoms.*

Diagnosing the flu:

- It may be difficult to tell if you are suffering from the flu or another illness.
- Your health care provider may be able to tell you if you have the flu.
- If you develop flu-like symptoms and are concerned about possible complications, consult your health care provider.

How do I know at what point I should seek medical care for the flu?

Most people with the flu can stay home and do not require professional care, but always contact your provider if you have any questions or concerns especially if you have severe illness.

Emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

In Children

- Fast or troubled breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough.

In Adults

- Difficulty breathing/shortness of breath
- Pain/pressure in the chest/abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough.

What Should I Do If I'm Caring for Someone with the Flu?

- Keep the sick person in a room separate from the common areas of the house and encourage the sick person to always cover their coughs and sneezes.
- Designate one person as the caregiver; clean hands with soap and water and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer each time you enter and leave the sick room.
- Keep everyone's personal items separate. All household members should avoid sharing pens, papers, clothes, towels, sheets, blankets, food or eating utensils unless cleaned between uses.
- Consider having the sick person wear a surgical mask if they have to be in a common area of the home around other family members.
- Disinfect doorknobs, switches, handles, computers, telephones, toys and other surfaces that are commonly touched around the home or workplace.
- Wash everyone's dishes in the dishwasher or by hand using very hot water & soap.
- Wash everyone's clothes in a standard washing machine as you normally would. Use detergent & very hot water and wash your hands after handling dirty laundry.



Checklists for Individuals & Families

This checklist will help you to take steps to lessen the impact of a severe influenza pandemic on you and your family. Many of these steps are good advice to help you and your family during any disaster, like winter storms and flooding.

STORE WATER, FOOD, and OTHER ESSENTIALS.

Prepare to get by for at least a week on what you have at home. You may be unable to get to a store, or stores may not be open or may have limited supplies for weeks. Public services may also be disrupted, so prepare for outages in electricity, water, and garbage services. Keep extra supplies on hand (they can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and natural disasters).

Examples of non-perishable food:

- Canned meat, such as tuna, chicken, turkey, Vienna sausage, SPAM
- Canned beans, fruits, vegetables, soups, stew, spaghetti, chili
- Protein, granola, or fruit bars
- Dry cereal and/or dried fruit; instant soup and/or cereal
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Nuts and trail mix
- Comfort food (i.e. cookies, crackers, hot cocoa mix, instant coffee, tea bags)
- Canned juices
- Bottled water
- Baby formula, jarred/canned baby food

Examples of other emergency supplies:

- Dry and canned pet food, cat litter
- Disposable diapers
- Feminine supplies
- Flashlight
- Portable radio
- Batteries (for all above)
- Manual can-opener
- Plastic garbage bags
- Tissues & toilet paper
- Entertainment (games/books/movies)
- Supplies for persons with special needs
- Some extra cash

STORE MEDICAL and HEALTH SUPPLIES

Get an extra supply of your regular prescription drugs. Ask your healthcare provider for a prescription. If your insurance will not agree to cover the extra supply, you may need to pay out-of-pocket. Keep health supplies and nonprescription drugs on hand.

Examples of medical and health supplies:

- Prescribed medicines and supplies, such as glucose meters and blood-pressure monitoring equipment
- Soap and water
- Alcohol-based hand cleaner
- Sanitizer wipes
- Medicines for fever and pain, such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen
- Diarrhea remedy (**not generally recommended for children**)
- Throat lozenges
- Cough syrup
- Thermometers
- Vitamins
- Fluids with electrolytes (i.e. Gatorade and Pedialyte)

Make Household Emergency Plans

Prepare for possible changes in healthcare. For example, medical advice and healthcare may be more difficult to obtain during a severe pandemic and healthcare providers and medical facilities may be overwhelmed. They may not be enough medical supplies, healthcare providers, and hospital beds for all persons who are ill.

In a severe pandemic, you may be advised to stay away from others and from public places as much as possible. Plan to limit the number for trips you take to shop or run errands. Also, remember public transportation routes and times may be limited.

Think about how you would care for people in your family who have disabilities if support services are not available.

Decide who will take care of children if schools are closed.

For general preparedness, agree on a point of contact where all family members can check-in if you are separated

Make Work Plans

PREPARE TO STAY HOME

Staying home from work when you are sick is the most important thing you can do to protect others.

KNOW POLICIES

Ask your employer or union about sick leave and policies about absences, time off, and telecommuting.

ENCOURAGE PLANNING

Every business, organization and agency should have a plan for making sure essential work can get done if large numbers of employees are absent over many months. You may be asked to perform duties that are not typically part of your job.

EXPLORE OTHER WAYS TO GET YOUR WORK DONE

Find ways to reduce personal contact, such as increased use of e-mails or phone conferences. Plan to work from home whenever possible.

Flu season seems to be dying down— Why do people still need a vaccination against 2009 H1N1?

The flu season is not over yet. As recently as January 15, 7 states were still reporting regional flu activity, so flu is still out there. Also, seasonal flu typically peaks in February and March and influenza activity can occur as late as May. So, increased activity from either seasonal flu, 2009 H1N1 or both are still possible this season.

For example, during the 1957-58 pandemic, flu activity dropped in December and January. Public health officials assumed the worst was over, and stopped encouraging people to get vaccinated. Then flu activity increased abruptly in February and March, and hospitalizations and deaths increased as well.

That was an important lesson—even if flu activity dies down in January, as it has this year, the season is not over. It's still important to get vaccinated against the flu and be as prepared as possible if activity increases again this season.

Public Health Clinic Appointments:

Chico 891-2731
Oroville 538-7341

Further information is also available at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov or the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) website at www.cdph.ca.gov



How Well Does the Flu Vaccine Work?

How effective is the seasonal flu vaccine?

How well the flu vaccine works depends on how well the match is between the seasonal influenza (flu) vaccine and the types of seasonal flu viruses that are circulating that year. Scientists try to predict what strains (types) of flu viruses are most likely to spread and cause illness each year to put into the vaccine. Past studies have shown in years when the vaccine viruses and circulating viruses are well-matched, the vaccine can reduce the chances of getting the flu by 70% to 90% in healthy adults. The vaccine may be somewhat less effective in elderly persons and very young children, but vaccination can still prevent serious complications from the flu.

In healthy adults younger than 65 years of age, the flu vaccine can also prevent lost work days, and keep you from having to see the doctor or using unnecessary antibiotics.

Is the seasonal flu vaccine effective against all types of flu and cold viruses?

The seasonal flu vaccine is your best protection against seasonal flu viruses. However, this year there is a new and very different flu virus spreading worldwide among people called 2009 H1N1 flu. The seasonal flu vaccine will not provide protection against 2009 H1N1 influenza. The 2009 H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine – it is intended to be used along-side seasonal flu vaccine.

The seasonal flu vaccine also does not provide protection against non-flu viruses that can cause colds and other respiratory illnesses. It can sometimes be hard to tell the difference between a cold and the flu based on symptoms alone.

The seasonal flu vaccine won't protect you from cold or flu viruses that are already in your body when you get a seasonal flu vaccine. The seasonal flu vaccine takes about two weeks to provide protection from the flu, and it's your best protection to prevent the most common types of flu this season.

Why do I need to get a seasonal flu vaccine every year?

Flu viruses change from year to year, which means two things. First, you can get the flu more than once during your lifetime. The immunity (natural protection that develops against a disease after a person has had that disease) that is built up from having the flu caused by one flu virus strain doesn't always provide protection against newer strains of the flu. Second, a seasonal flu vaccine made against flu viruses going around last year may not protect against the newer viruses. That is why the flu vaccine is updated to include current viruses every year.

Because of these reasons, a new seasonal flu vaccine is needed each year.

Does the seasonal flu vaccine work the same for everyone?

The seasonal flu vaccine is the single best way to prevent seasonal flu, and vaccination is the main tool used to protect people from seasonal influenza. A number of studies have shown that the seasonal flu vaccine works, but how well the vaccine works can change from year to year and vary among different groups of people. The ability of the seasonal flu vaccine to protect a person depends on at least two things: 1) the age and health of the person getting the vaccine, and 2) the similarity or "match" between the virus strains in the vaccine and those being spread in the community.

Vaccine effectiveness is not 100%, and some people can still get the flu.

Where Can I Get My Flu Shot? Please call 538-2840

Updated March 2010