



*Palo Alto Medical
Foundation*

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H1N1 Pandemic Flu: What Should I Do If I Get Flu-Like Symptoms?

The H1N1 pandemic flu virus (once known as “swine flu”) is causing illness in people in the United States and in countries around the world. The symptoms of H1N1 pandemic flu are similar to the regular seasonal flu and may include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Symptoms of H1N1 may also include diarrhea and vomiting. Below is information on what to do if you or a loved one becomes ill. PAMF bases its recommendations on guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local public health authorities.

Who is at risk?

Individuals at risk for H1N1 pandemic flu are similar to those who are at risk for seasonal flu. To date, persons with the following conditions and in the following age groups seem to be the most severely affected:

- Asthma, emphysema and other chronic lung diseases
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Liver or kidney disease
- Immune deficiency
- Pregnancy
- Less than 2 years of age

What should I do if I am sick?

- **Avoid contact with others to prevent spreading your illness.** Stay home from work or school, and minimize the amount of time you spend with others, including avoiding travel and public places. The CDC recommends that people with flu-like illness stay home at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (100 degrees F) or no longer have signs of a fever without using fever-reducing medicines (such as Tylenol).
- **If you have to leave home, wear a facemask.**
- **Cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue.**
- **Wash your hands often**, especially after you sneeze or cough. Alcohol-based hand cleansers are also effective.

Most people recover without medical care. If you have severe illness or are at high risk for flu complications, contact your doctor immediately. If you have severe flu illness, your doctor may prescribe antiviral medications if appropriate. ***Note:** If a widespread H1N1 outbreak, these antiviral drugs may be in short supply. They will be given first to people who are hospitalized or at high risk of severe illness from flu.*

What are warning signs of illness that require emergency medical care?

In children, seek emergency medical care if the child:

- Is breathing fast or has trouble breathing
- Has a bluish or gray skin color
- Is not drinking enough fluids

- Experiences severe or persistent vomiting
- Is not waking up or not interacting
- Is so irritable that he or she does not want to be held
- Displays flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worsened cough

In adults, seek emergency medical care if you or the person:

- Has difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Has pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Experiences sudden dizziness
- Is confused
- Experiences severe or persistent vomiting
- Displays flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with a fever and worsened cough