



Alaska guidance regarding identifying novel H1N1 influenza (swine flu) infection and seeking medical treatment for illness

What are the symptoms of novel H1N1 influenza (swine flu)?

Symptoms include fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit and some (or all) of the following: headache, tiredness, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, diarrhea, and vomiting.

When should I go to see a health care provider?

Current reports of novel H1N1 influenza infection nationwide indicate that the virus is not causing serious health problems in most people, and therefore, most infected people do not need to go see a health care provider if they develop symptoms. If ill persons experience more severe symptoms or if they are at increased risk for serious complications, they should seek medical attention. Due to the high risk of spreading the infection to others, ill persons who plan to seek medical attention should notify their health care provider prior to arrival, if possible.

In children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not 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 or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

High risk groups for serious complications:

- The high-risk groups for novel H1N1 flu are unclear at this time; however, people at higher risk of serious complications from seasonal flu include people aged 65 years and older, children aged younger than 5 years, pregnant women, people of any age with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease), and people who have compromised immune systems (e.g., people infected with HIV). Persons who have any of the above risk factors should seek medical attention if they think they might have influenza infection.

What else can I do to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses, such as the novel H1N1 flu strain?

- Stay home from work, school or day care for at least seven days following the development of symptoms, or until they have been without symptoms for 24-hours, whichever is longer.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Otherwise, cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also are effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

For up to date information, go to: <http://www.pandemicflu.alaska.gov/>