

HEALTH BULLETIN

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H1N1 INFLUENZA (Swine Flu)

Public health officials within the United States and throughout the world are investigating outbreaks of H1N1 influenza (swine flu). One portion of the H1N1 influenza (flu) virus seems to have come from swine or pig, but not fully associated with any pig or pig products. The viruses are not transmitted by eating pork or pork products. H1N1 flu (swine flu) causes respiratory illnesses that can spread from human to human.

The symptoms of H1N1 flu in people are similar to the symptoms of a regular flu in humans and may include: **fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, chills, headache, bodyaches and extreme fatigue.** These symptoms usually appear from 2 to 7 days after the contact of an infected person. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting with H1N1 flu. Severe illness, such as pneumonia and deaths have been reported with the H1N1 flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions. Young children may not have typical symptoms, but may have difficulty in breathing and low activity. Most people who get H1N1 flu recover fully within 1-2 weeks.

There is no vaccine for H1N1 flu at this time. Fortunately, the H1N1 flu viruses isolated from patients in the United States are sensitive to two antiviral drugs, which can be used to treat patients with flu-like illnesses.

Because the current situation is likely to change, you can always get information at:

www.cdc.gov/swineflu
www.azdhs.gov

H1N1 FLU and BREASTFEEDING

New Mothers Can Take Everyday Precautions to Protect Their Babies.

Take extra care to wash your hands often with soap and running water. Do not cough or sneeze in the baby's face. If you are coughing and sneezing, consider wearing a mask.

Breastfeeding Protects Your Baby's Health.

Flu can be very serious in young babies. Babies who are not breastfed get sick from infections more often and more severely than babies who are breastfed. You pass on protective antibodies to your baby during breastfeeding and antibodies help fight off infection. Since this is a new virus, we don't know yet about specific protection against it. Breast milk protects your baby's health in many ways.

Continue to Breastfeed Your Baby Even if You Have Come in Contact with the Flu or are Sick.

You make antibodies to fight diseases with which you come in contact. Your breast milk is custom-made to fight diseases your baby is exposed to as well. This is important in a young baby whose immune system is still developing; it helps your baby develop his/her own ability to fight off diseases.

Continue to Breastfeed Even if Your Baby is Sick.

One of the best things you can do for your sick baby is to keep breastfeeding. Babies who are sick need more fluids than when they are well. Give your baby many chances to breastfeed throughout the illness because the fluid babies get from breast milk is better than anything else. If your baby will not breastfeed, take him/her to your doctor.

Continue to Breastfeed if You are Taking Antiviral Drugs for the Flu.

Mothers who are breastfeeding should continue to breastfeed their babies while being treated with antiviral drugs for the flu. For medicines other than antiviral drugs, your doctor should tell you whether to continue breastfeeding your baby.



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