



## Northwood University Health Center

### H1N1 (Swine Flu) Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Definition of H1N1:**

H1N1 influenza is a respiratory infection caused by influenza A virus. What is popularly called the swine flu, H1N1 is type of influenza A virus which has mutated to form a new strain of influenza. The H1N1 is a genetic combination of swine, avian and human influenza viruses. In cyclic waves, viruses undergo mutation and re-assortment of their genetic material causing new strains to appear periodically.

#### **SYMPTOMS OF H1N1 INFLUENZA:**

The symptoms of H1N1 influenza are similar to those of infections with other seasonal flu strains, may be mild or severe and include the following:

- Fever of greater than 101
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Respiratory Illness and Pneumonia
- Coughing / Sneezing
- Body aches
- Chills
- Watery Eyes
- Diarrhea and Vomiting possible

Symptoms develop three to five days after you're exposed to the virus and usually continue for 5-7days. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 may pose an additional health threat to those persons with chronic medical conditions.

#### **MODE OF TRANSMISSION:**

Virus enters your body when you inhale contaminated droplets expelled into the air by coughing or sneezing. Viruses may also be transmitted into your body when they are picked up by your hands from a contaminated surface and passed to your eyes, nose or mouth. The mucous membrane lining of your eyes, nose and mouth allow easy access for the viruses.

#### **PERSONAL SAFEGUARDS:**

The methods that will help you protect yourself and protect others from H1N1 influenza are the same as for any seasonal flu:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water to the tune of "Happy Birthday"
  - Always before eating or touching your face and eyes
  - Always after coughing, sneezing or wiping your nose
  - After handling shared objects---i.e. computer keyboards, door handles
  - After using the restroom or changing diapers.
- Waterless hand sanitizer is not a substitute for soap and water, but it is a great way to protect yourself and others when soap and water is not an option.
- Proper Cough and Sneeze Etiquette
  - Cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough
  - Use tissues or cough/sneeze into your sleeve
  - Use tissues once and throw away---then wash your hands
- Avoid close contact with ill persons
- Get your seasonal flu immunization and watch for the availability of H1N1 immunization
- Keep yourself health with good nutrition, adequate hydration and adequate rest
- When you are ill---Stay home and away from others

#### **NOT SURE WHAT TO DO:**

Rest and drink fluids. Tylenol may help ease fever and body aches. **Do not use aspirin** for children, teens or young adults as aspirin has been shown to cause Reyes Syndrome, a serious complication that occurs with viral illnesses and aspirin use. Whenever you are not sure what you should do, call your health care provider for guidance. There are antiviral medications that a doctor may prescribe to ease symptoms.

#### **PLANNING TO TRAVEL:**

Please check with your local health department or check the CDC website noted below before you travel.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

For more information, call the Health Center at 989-837-4268 or visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/index.htm>