

## H1N1 General Information

### What is it?

The H1N1 influenza virus spreads from person to person in the same way the seasonal flu spreads, such as having close contact with someone who is coughing or sneezing. Most people who become infected with H1N1 influenza are experiencing mild to moderate flu-like symptoms, such as: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body ache, headache, chills, and fatigue. A significant number of people have also reported diarrhea and vomiting.

### Prevention

Individuals should follow the same precautionary measures that are recommended to protect against seasonal influenza--frequent hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, using hand sanitizers when necessary, and staying home when ill. One of the most important ways to strengthen your immune system against influenza is making sure you have adequate levels of Vitamin D. Contact your doctor to find out what your levels are, and to determine what level of supplementation is necessary for you. See the article, "Dr. Allen's Flu Season Recommendations" for more details.

### H1N1 Vaccine

The H1N1 vaccine should soon be available to the general public. It is expected to arrive in the Kirkland office this week. Please call if you would like an appointment to receive either the seasonal flu shot or the H1N1 vaccine.

The CDC is recommending H1N1 vaccine to the following population groups:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- People between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old
- People ages of 25 through 64 years of age who are at higher risk for severe H1N1 because of chronic health conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, diabetes, or brain/nervous system disorders) or weakened immune systems
- Healthcare providers

If you would like to have a discussion of your individual risk factors and the benefits/risks of vaccination, please schedule an appointment with Dr. Allen.

### Treatment

Most people who have been sick with this virus in the U.S. have recovered at home without medical treatment. To prevent the spread to other people, please keep your child home for 7 days after first onset of symptoms, or at least 24 hours after symptoms resolve. It is important that your child not be exposed to other children who are sick, and that if your child has a flu-like illness, that he or she does not expose other people in order to keep from spreading illness.

### Should I seek medical care?

If you or your child are sick enough to where you would normally come see your doctor for care, then yes, please make a sick appointment. If you are experiencing mild symptoms or are simply concerned that you may have H1N1 (Swine) flu, then there is no need to seek care. Stay home and get rest!

### Home treatment

- Get plenty of rest to allow your body to spend as much energy as possible fighting the infection, and to speed recovery.
- Eat lots of colorful fruits and vegetables to increase your antioxidant intake.
- Avoid refined sugars and processed foods. These decrease immune response to infection.
- Epsom salt baths for muscle aches and pains.

- Drink plenty of fluids and electrolytes to keep from getting dehydrated, such as tea with honey (Throat Coat tea is excellent for sore throats), miso soup or broth, Recharge sports drink, diluted juices. If you are caring for an infant offer frequent sips of fluids such as Pedialyte, breastmilk or formula, diluted juices.
- Cool mist humidifier, steam showers, saline nasal rinses (Nasopure or Neti Pot) for nasal congestion symptoms.
- Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen for severe fever or body aches

**Please call our office for an appointment if you are experiencing:**

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or more in a child less than 3 months old
- Fever for 3 or more days, or a return of a fever later in an illness
- Rapidly worsening illness
- Severe sore throat or severe cough
- Chest pain
- Lethargy or inability to get out of bed
- Unable to take fluids
- Signs of dehydration

If you have severe symptoms or are at high risk for flu complications, seek medical care and your doctor will determine if testing or treatment is needed. Because we have many infants and pregnant women who visit the clinic, we will be scheduling influenza illness visits towards the end of the day, to prevent exposure to healthy people and to minimize the spread of this contagious virus.

**When to seek URGENT medical attention**

**For CHILDREN**, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or difficulty breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color (call 911 immediately)
- Unable to drink 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

**For ADULTS**, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- 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

**For more information:**

King County's H1N1 page

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/preparedness/pandemicflu/swineflu/general.aspx>

CDC's H1N1 resource page

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu>

Public Health – King County Hotline: 1-877-903-KING (5464)