

Can H1N1 be treated?

Most cases of H1N1 do not need treatment. But the disease can be treated easily if there is need for treatment. Treatment should be initiated as early as possible. Health workers sometimes isolate pandemic flu patients to monitor and ensure that the condition of the patient does not get worse. Isolating patients also ensures that the patients do not pass on the disease to other people and are treated in time if need for treatment arises.

Can I get infected with H1N1 if I eat pig meat?

No. H1N1 is not spread by pigs. It is safe to eat pork and pork products which have been prepared in a clean way and cooked well.

How can I protect myself and others from H1N1?

H1N1 can be prevented in the following ways:

1. Wash hands with soap and water frequently

Hygiene is very important in the control of flu. Wash hands with soap and water frequently, especially after:

- Coughing and sneezing.
- Shaking hands with people who have flu-like symptoms.
- Handling poultry and poultry products.
- Cleaning the poultry house or touching poultry droppings.
- Slaughtering and preparing poultry for cooking.

Encourage people in your home to wash their hands with water and soap frequently.



2. Maintain high standards of hygiene



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Your hands could be carrying flu viruses. Clean common items used in the house with water and soap or wipe with a household disinfectant. The objects to clean include tables, telephones, key boards, door handles, clothing, bedside tables, kitchen counters and baby toys.



3. Keep your distance

Avoid crowded areas, such as markets, public meetings and entertainment places.

- Keep away from people with flu-like symptoms, especially if you have other health problems or you are pregnant. Flu can complicate your condition.
- Keep at least one metre away from a person with flu-like symptoms
- Stay home if you are sick with flu-like symptoms to avoid infecting other people.



4. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing

- Sneeze in your sleeves or in a tissue and throw the tissue in the waste basket.



5. Separate people who are sick with flu-like symptoms

Keep a person sick with flu-like symptoms away from other people if you can.



- Keep the windows in the room with a person with flu-like symptoms open.

- Remind the sick person to cover his/her mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing.

6. Vaccinate the population if vaccines are available.

Vaccination is the only safe and sustainable way of preventing H1N1

7. Follow the advice given by the government and health officials on how to prevent pandemic flu.

Is it safe to travel to countries or places which have reported H1N1?

At the moment health authorities do not advise any travel restrictions to places with pandemic flu. But while there, take the precautions above to avoid infection.

For more information contact:

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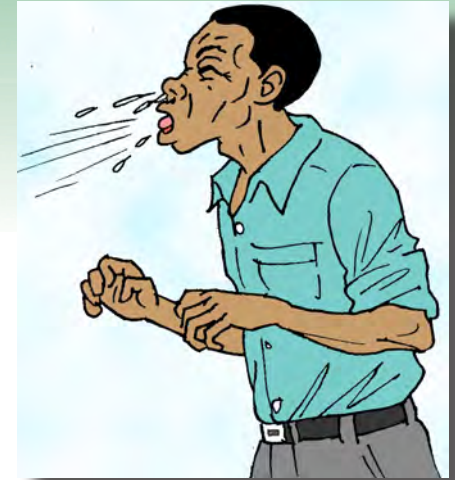
Facts About Pandemic Flu (H1N1)

What is pandemic flu?

Pandemic flu is an infection of the air passage (respiratory tract) caused by the H1N1 virus. It is a new disease which started in Mexico in March, 2009. Although it was initially called "swine" flu, the disease does not come from pigs and is not spread by pigs.

How do people get the H1N1 flu?

H1N1 flu spreads easily from one person to another. It is spread through droplets that come from the nose and mouth of an infected person as he/she coughs, sneezes and talks. The droplets can go as far as one metre away. The viruses in these droplets remain alive on hard surfaces (such as tables, telephones, door handles, clothes, paper and key boards) for several hours. People who come in contact with these surfaces pick up the viruses. The viruses get into their bodies when they eat or touch their noses, mouths and eyes with contaminated hands. Flu viruses also get into the body through breathing in air with the viruses.



How widespread is H1N1?

H1N1 started in Mexico in March of 2009. By January 31, 2010 the disease had affected more than 209 countries which jointly recorded more than 600,000 cases. Of these, 15,174 died of the disease. By November 30, 2009, 37 African countries had recorded a total of 22,164 cases with 138 deaths.

How serious is H1N1?

H1N1 is a mild flu which usually cures on its own without treatment. But the flu can also become serious and cause complications, and even death, especially among people with other health conditions and weaker immune systems. These include old people, children, pregnant women and people with other health conditions.