

# H1N1 PANDEMIC FLU PREPAREDNESS

**NOT  
YOUR  
USUAL  
BUG**



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## **A GUIDE FOR THE COMMUNITY**

Thanks to Fort Wayne-Allen County Department of Health for sharing content and layout design



# PREPARATION FOR A PANDEMIC

Every year, the “normal” flu kills approximately 36,000 people in the United States.

A pandemic is an outbreak of a new flu that occurs all over the world with many people getting sick at the same time. That is what is occurring now with H1N1 (swine flu).

The H1N1 pandemic may come and go in waves, each wave lasting for weeks.

A vaccine is being produced for H1N1 and will begin to be available in October.

To prevent the spread of the virus, health officials are asking people who become sick to stay home for 24 hours after their fever is gone without using fever-reducing medicines.

None of this is very pleasant to think about. But it is important to understand this information so that you can prepare yourself and your family.

This booklet will help you gather the information and resources you need to prepare. Included are tips on how to provide care to yourself and your family if someone is ill, and guidelines for when to call your doctor or other health services.

## FLU Q&A

**Q: What can I do to prepare?**

**A:** Read this booklet and talk to your family about what is going on.

**Q: Will there be a vaccine available?**

**A:** Yes, beginning in October, H1N1 vaccine will be available. Public health officials are eager for everyone to get vaccinated and they are emphasizing that those identified as high priority get vaccinated first until more vaccine is made available, this includes:

- **Pregnant women** because they are at higher risk of complications and can potentially provide protection to infants who cannot be vaccinated;

- **Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age** because younger infants are at higher risk of influenza-related complications and cannot be vaccinated. Vaccination of those in close contact with infants younger than 6 months old might help protect infants by “cocooning” them from the virus;

- **Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel** because infections among healthcare workers have been reported and this can be a potential source of infection for vulnerable patients.

- **All people from 6 months through 24 years of age - Children from 6 months through 18 years of age** because cases of 2009 H1N1 influenza have been seen in children who are in close contact with each other in school and day care settings, which increases the likelihood of disease spread, and

- **Young adults 19 through 24 years of age** because many cases of 2009 H1N1 influenza have been seen in these healthy young adults and they often live, work, and study in close proximity, and they are a frequently mobile population; and,

- **Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza like asthma, heart disease or HIV.**

**Q: How can I protect myself?**

**A:** Avoid close contact with those that are already sick, wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough and stay home if you are sick.



# THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN...

## SEASONAL FLU

- Caused by strains of influenza virus that we already know about.
- Occurs every year, generally during the months of October to April.
- Children older than 2 and healthy adults are usually not at risk for complications.
- Has an impact on society, but it is not an emergency.

## PANDEMIC FLU

- Caused by new strains of influenza virus.
- Occurs a few times every hundred years and can happen at any time of the year. May cause waves of infections that last for several weeks that come and go, or for a long period of time.
- Any age group can be at risk for becoming sick and dying.
- This can be an emergency. There may be disruption in every day life because many people become sick at the same time.

# BE PREPARED:

- **HAVE ENOUGH FOOD AND MEDICINE THAT FAMILY MEMBERS REGULARLY USE ON HAND** to last two to four weeks.
- **TALK TO YOUR FAMILY AND LOVED ONES.** Make back-up plans for taking care of loved ones who are far away, disabled or have special needs.
- **TALK TO YOUR EMPLOYER ABOUT WHAT THEY WILL DO IN A PANDEMIC** - Are there leave policies in place or is there a possibility of you working from home?

If you take medications, talk to your doctor and pharmacist about stocking several weeks of essential medications.

# FAMILY EMERGENCY PLAN

Record the health information and medical histories of everyone in your household. You will also want a list of any medicines that you or members of your family take, name of the prescribing physicians, the prescription number and the address or phone number for the pharmacy. Be sure to also record any drug allergies that you might have.

Make sure your children and family members know who to contact in case of a health emergency.

Fill out the family emergency card in this guide and keep it readily accessible.



**H1N1 Pandemic FLU Preparedness: A Guide for the Community**

[www.flu.oregon.gov](http://www.flu.oregon.gov) • [www.mchealth.org](http://www.mchealth.org)

# COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

If you have children in school or day care, be sure to have contact information on hand in the event you need to communicate with them.

If loved ones live out of town, be sure that you know the name and phone number of their doctor or someone in their community who can look in on them and communicate with you.

Consider talking with your neighbors to plan how you will check on elderly or disabled residents and those living alone.

## ...IN A PANDEMIC

- Stay calm-We will get through this.
- Stay home if you are sick, almost everyone who gets sick will recover at home with no need for medical care.
- When the vaccine becomes available, find out if you are eligible to get one, this is the single greatest thing we can do to prevent the spread of H1N1 in our community.
- Closely monitor the news and information from community leaders and follow the instructions of local public health and emergency officials.
- If you can, check on people who may need help, such as the elderly, single parents of small children, or someone you know who does not have resources to get medical help if they need it.

## RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF FLU QUICKLY

Flu symptoms, even in a pandemic, tend to look the same as regular flu. The difference in a pandemic is that larger numbers of people may become ill and severe illness may occur more often in young and mid-life adults as well as in young children.



# IS IT THE FLU?

Here are the symptoms to help you distinguish flu from other respiratory illnesses such as the common cold.

SIGNS and SYMPTOMS	FLU	COLD
<b>How it starts, most common are:</b>	Sudden	Gradual
Fever	High (over 101° F, lasting 3 to 4 days)	Low or none
Cough	Dry; can become severe	Hacking
Sore Throat	Sometimes	Common
Muscle aches and pains	Usual; often severe	Slight
Tiredness and weakness	Can last up to 2 to 3 weeks	Very mild
<b>Some ill people may also have:</b>		
Chest discomfort	Common/often significant	Usually mild
Stuffy nose	Sometimes	Common
Sneezing	Sometimes	Usually
diarrhea and vomiting	Common (especially children)	uncommon

## HOW TO CARE FOR YOURSELF AT HOME

During a pandemic, it may be more difficult to see your doctor because so many people are sick at the same time but you should seek medical care for yourself or your children if you normally would. Public health officials believe that most people will be able manage their symptoms at home and not need to seek medical care. There are a number of things you can do to take care of your family and loved ones if they become sick:

- Get plenty of rest. Tiredness will likely last for days to weeks.
- Drink lots of fluids, especially if you have a high fever. You should try and drink one full glass of water, juice or other clear liquid per hour to make up for the fluid you are losing due to fever.
- Take medications for fever (follow package instructions). Remember: children under 18 should not take aspirin (also called salicylates).
- Wear layered clothing, as you will likely have periods when you are hot and feverish and times when you are chilled.
- Listen for instructions. Public health officials and community leaders will let people know what else can be done to take care of family members and loved ones at home and when they should be taken to a doctor.



### When Taking Over the Counter (OTC) Medications:

- Always read the label
- Use as directed
- Only take OTC products that will treat the symptoms that you have. Use caution when taking more than one OTC product at a time.
- Don't use medications past their expiration date
- Never use an adult dose for a child

# HOW TO TREAT YOUR SYMPTOMS...

For this symptom:	Choose a medicine with:
COUGH	Cough suppressant (e.g. Dextromethorphan)
PHLEGM or MUCUS (that you cannot cough up)	Expectorant (e.g. Guaifenesin)
RUNNY NOSE and SNEEZING	Antihistamine (e.g. Allegra®, Benadryl®, Chlor-Trimeton®, Claritin®, Clarinex®, Teldrin®, Zyrtec®, etc.)
FEVER and/or MUSCLE ACHES	Ibuprofen (e.g. Motrin®), acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®), or analgesic such as aspirin (not for children)
DEHYDRATION	Fluids, especially those with a balanced electrolyte solution such as Gatorade®, Pedialyte®, etc.
STUFFY NOSE	Nasal decongestant, such as phenylephrine (e.g., Neo-Synephrine®) and pseudoephedrine (e.g. Sudafed®, etc.)

## SEE A DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE:

- Difficulty breathing or chest pain
- Purple or blue discoloration of the lips
- Vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
- Signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination, or in infants, a lack of tears when they cry
- Seizures or convulsions, except in situations involving people with seizure disorder, all seizures should be evaluated
- Shortness of breath, painful breathing or wheezing
- Chest pain
- Confusion, disorientation, or unresponsiveness
- High fever that does not respond to ibuprofen or acetaminophen
- If you or a family member start to improve, but then get worse
- Cough producing green or bloody phlegm or mucus, especially if there is a high fever
- Severe headache with high fever, stiff neck, inability to move, walk, speak or think normally

# DON'T SPREAD THE GERM...

Influenza is transmitted by inhaling the virus when someone coughs or sneezes or by touching a contaminated object and then touching your nose, mouth or eyes.

To minimize the spread of the disease, health officials recommend that you stay home if you have been sick, until 24 hours after your fever has resolved without using fever-reducing medications.

## HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO TO MINIMIZE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE:

### AT ALL TIMES:

- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly (for at least 20 seconds—sing Happy Birthday to yourself twice)
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough and sneeze (use your sleeve if you don't have a tissue)
- Stay at home if you're sick
- Stay current with your regularly recommended vaccinations

### IN THE HOME:

- Try to keep ill family members separated from those who are not sick
- Designate one person to care for your ill family member(s)



# FAMILY HEALTH INFORMATION

Fill in information for each family member in the space provided. Like much of the planning for a pandemic, this can also help prepare for other emergencies.

## FAMILY HEALTH INFORMATION CARD

FAMILY MEMBER	DATE OF BIRTH	BLOOD TYPE	ALLERGIES	MEDICAL CONDITIONS	MEDICATION DOSAGE/FREQUENCY

## FAMILY EMERGENCY CARD

• In-town emergency contact  
(Name/Phone Number)

\_\_\_\_\_

• Out-of-town emergency contact

\_\_\_\_\_

• Doctor(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

• Closest Hospital

\_\_\_\_\_

• Pharmacy

\_\_\_\_\_

• Employer(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

• School(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

• Religious/spiritual adviser

\_\_\_\_\_

• Veterinarian

\_\_\_\_\_

### WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Our community needs volunteers who are trained and ready to respond in a crisis. If you would like to help, contact one of these agencies:

- Health Reserve Corps (healthcare providers only), [www.mchealth.org/hrc](http://www.mchealth.org/hrc)
- American Red Cross, 503-528-5649

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Public Health Hotline  
**1-800-978-3040** or check  
Multnomah County's website  
at **[www.mchealth.org](http://www.mchealth.org)**

Special thanks to the Fort Wayne-Allen  
County Department of Health.  
[www.fw-ac-deptofhealth.com](http://www.fw-ac-deptofhealth.com)



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