

# Get the Facts About Novel H1N1 Influenza

Content Source:

Rutherford Polk McDowell Health District

## Novel H1N1 Influenza

Novel H1N1 (referred to as swine flu early on) is a new influenza virus that is spreading from person-to-person.

## How does novel H1N1 Influenza spread?



- This virus is thought to spread the same way seasonal flu spreads
- Primarily through respiratory droplets
  - Coughing
  - Sneezing
  - Touching respiratory droplets on yourself, another person, or an object, then touching mucus membranes (e.g., mouth, nose, eyes) without washing hands

## Signs and symptoms

Symptoms of novel H1N1 flu in people are similar to those associated with seasonal flu.

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- In addition, vomiting (25%) and diarrhea (25%) have been reported. (Higher rate than for seasonal flu.)



## Can you get novel H1N1 Influenza from eating pork?

No. The novel H1N1 influenza virus (formerly referred to as swine flu) virus is not spread by food.

You cannot get novel H1N1 flu from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

## What can you do to protect yourself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against novel H1N1 virus. However, a novel H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and may be ready for the public in the fall. As always, a vaccine will be available to protect against seasonal influenza

However, everyday actions can help prevent spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza.

## Take these everyday steps to protect your health

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Wash for 15 – 20 seconds. (Sing the Happy Birthday or ABC song)
- Alcohol-based hand wipes or gel sanitizers are also effective. (alcohol gel must be 60% to be effective)

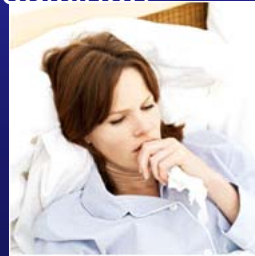


## Take these everyday steps to protect your health

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Avoid contact with sick people.

## If you get sick...

- You should stay home and keep away from others as much as possible, including avoiding travel and not going to work or school, for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.)



## Watch for emergency warning signs

Most people should be able to recover at home, but watch for emergency warning signs that mean you should seek immediate medical care.

### In adults:

- 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

## Emergency warning signs in children

If a child gets sick and experiences any of these warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

In children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Irritable, the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough



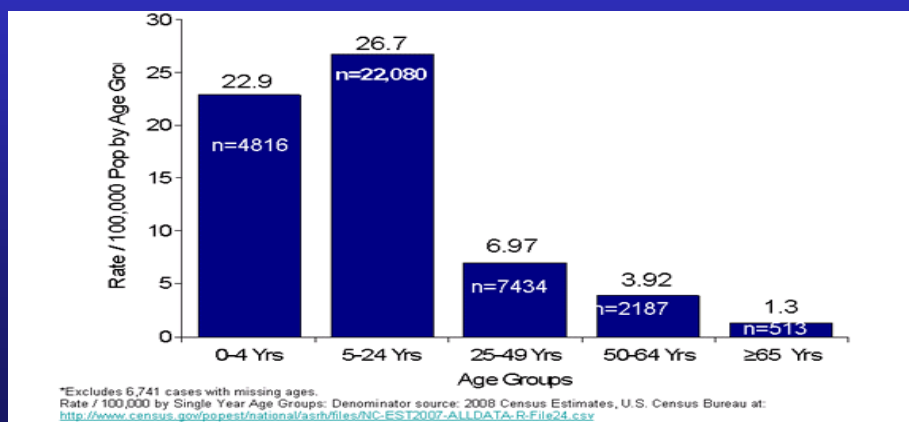
## Who will be recommended as priority groups to receive the novel H1N1 vaccine?

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel
- Persons 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 novel H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

## Why are seniors not in the priority groups?

- Current studies indicate the risk for infection among persons age 65 or older is less than the risk for younger age groups. Therefore, as vaccine supply and demand for vaccine among younger age groups is being met, programs and providers should offer vaccination to people over the age of 65.
- We think that seniors might have seen a virus like this a long time ago and might have some residual protection or immunity.

## Graph A: Novel H1N1 Confirmed and Probable Case Rate in the United States, By Age Group



## Seasonal Flu Vaccine

- The seasonal flu vaccine is not expected to protect against the novel H1N1 flu.
- The usual seasonal influenza viruses are still expected to cause illness this fall and winter. Individuals are encouraged to get their seasonal flu vaccine as soon as it is available.

## What is RPM doing?

- Flu Clinics are in the process of being scheduled
- We are working with our state and local partners to be prepared.
- Education efforts are being targeted to affected groups and organizations

## Summary

- We must all work together to limit and control the transmission of novel H1N1 influenza.
- Follow all recommendations for preventing the spread of influenza.
- For local guidance, contact your state, local, or county health officials.

## Summary

- For the most current information on the H1N1 influenza outbreak, visit  
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>  
<http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/gcdc/flu.html>  
<http://www.rpmhd.org/epi/>  
<http://www.flu.gov>  
<http://www.flu.nc.gov>

## Local Health Department #'s

- Rutherford: 828-287-6100
- Polk: 828-894-8271
- McDowell: 828-652-6811

## Resources

- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/espanol/>
- 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
- <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>