

H1N1 Flu and Children



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

What Parents Need to Know

H1N1 flu (once referred to as swine flu) is a respiratory disease that is spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Most U.S. cases have not been severe and are similar to seasonal flu, therefore, health officials recommend that children who are not sick can safely attend school. H1N1 flu viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get H1N1 flu from eating pork or pork products.

Symptoms of the flu include:

- Fever of more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit, AND cough/sore throat
- Other symptoms may include headache, chills, muscle aches or fatigue, sore throat, and in some case vomiting and diarrhea

In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

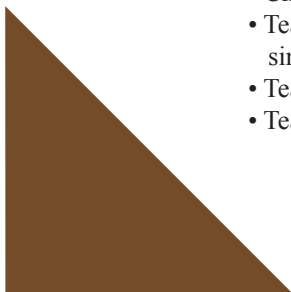
- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not acting right
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

Ways to Protect the Health of Children

To keep the flu from spreading to more people, the Tulsa Health Department recommends sick children stay at home. Any children who are sick at school should be sent home. It is important to be alert for signs of illness in your children.

Following are some ways you can slow the spread of germs:

- Children who are sick should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care
- Children should not return to school until fever free for at least 24 hours without fever medication
- Teach children to wash their hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing your ABCs twice).
- Teach children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow.
- Teach children to avoid close contact with others who are sick.



Groups at High Risk for Complications from Flu

It is particularly important for those who are at high risk for complications from influenza to continue good health habits and to seek medical guidance if they begin to experience flu-like symptoms. High risk groups include:

- Children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday
- Pregnant women
- People 50 years of age and older
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu

Influenza Vaccinations

It is anticipated that a H1N1 vaccine will be available this fall in addition to seasonal flu vaccine. Please check this site for vaccine availability in the coming weeks. Below is a listing of the initial vaccination priority groups that are recommended to receive the H1N1 vaccine.

- All people 6 months through 24 years of age
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- Pregnant women
- Healthcare and emergency services personnel
- People aged 25 – 64 years of age who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza

Source: CDC

For more information on H1N1 (swine) influenza you can visit the Tulsa Health Department web site at www.tulsa-health.org or call the public health information line at 918-595-4500.

