



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING H1N1 FLU

Updated 8/11/09

1: Why is the H1N1 virus causing so much concern and attention?

A: The H1N1 virus has continued to circulate in the U.S. and worldwide this summer causing significant outbreaks in some areas. The virus is recognized to have the potential to cause severe illness in some individuals, especially children.

2: What are the symptoms of H1N1 flu that individuals should watch for?

A: The symptoms of the H1N1 flu that should be closely watched for and can be similar to seasonal flu but may be more severe:

**Fever (greater than 100° F) or Chills
AND Respiratory symptoms, especially cough, or sore throat or
congestion**

3: How is the H1N1 virus spread?

A: The H1N1 virus is spread by person to person contact mainly through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with the virus, but it may also be spread by touching infected objects and then touching your nose or mouth.

4: Are some individuals at more risk for severe illness with the H1N1 flu?

A: Yes. CDC has recognized some populations who may be at more risk for severe illness:

- Health Care Workers
- Pregnant Women
- Care providers of children younger than 6 months
- **Children and individuals aged 6 months – 24 years**
- **Individuals with certain chronic health conditions**

Pregnant women, care providers of children younger than 6 months, children and individuals ages 6-24 years and children and individuals with chronic illness should contact their health care provider to discuss individualized and necessary precautions and planning regarding seasonal flu and H1N1 flu exposures and vaccines.

5: What should I do if I think I have flu?

A: **(UPDATED 8/7/09) Public health officials advise that individuals with flu-like illness remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100° F [37.8°C]), or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications such as Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen. (Source: CDC)**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Jefferson County Public Health Department advises that students, faculty or staff with flu-like illness (fever with a cough or sore throat) should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care.

6: When should students stay home and not go to school?

A: Jefferson County Public Health advises that students should remain home due to:

- Flu-like illness: Fever (>100 °F) OR Chills AND respiratory symptoms like cough, congestion, sore throat
- Students and adults should remain home at least 24 hours after the fever subsides. The absence of fever must be without taking fever-reducing medication such as Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen.
- Gastrointestinal symptoms including nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.
- When the student does not feel well enough to participate in the regular school day.
- District staff are not diagnosing H1N1. School staff are following the advice of Jefferson County Public Health and monitoring for flu-like symptoms in individuals.

7: When should I get emergency care for an ill child or person?

A: Get medical care right away if the sick person at home:

- has difficulty breathing or chest pain
- has purple or blue discoloration of the lips
- is vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
- has signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination, or in infants, a lack of tears when they cry
- has seizures (for example, uncontrolled convulsions) and is less responsive than normal or becomes confused.

CDC Warning! Do *not* give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to children or teenagers who have the flu: this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome. For more information about Reye's syndrome, visit the [National Institute of Health Web site.](#)

8: What can be done to prevent becoming ill with the H1N1 flu virus?

A: In addition to getting vaccinated with the H1N1 vaccine, individuals can protect themselves from H1N1 the way they protect themselves and others from seasonal influenza:

- Frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water is the most effective method to prevent the spread of illness. Hand sanitizers may be helpful when soap and water are not available and should be used with adult supervision.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough.
- Avoid contact with ill persons and maintain at least a 6 foot distance with someone who has flu-like symptoms.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Become vaccinated as directed by your health provider.
- Stay healthy with adequate rest, nutrition and activity.

9: Is there an H1N1 vaccine that will be developed and administered as protection from the H1N1 virus?

A: Yes. Vaccines are the most powerful public health tool for control of influenza, and the U.S. government is working closely with manufacturers to take steps in the process to manufacture an H1N1 vaccine which is expected to be available this fall. Information regarding the H1N1 flu vaccine will be distributed through public health departments.

10: Should I get the routine seasonal flu shot?

A: Yes - public health officials are emphasizing the importance of individuals getting a seasonal flu shot. It is recommended that individuals should discuss all immunizations for adults of children with their health provider. **The routine seasonal influenza vaccine will be administered separately and will not protect against the new H1N1 virus.**

11: What are our schools doing to address the concerns of the H1N1 flu and what guidelines are being followed?

A: Jeffco schools will continue to follow the advice of Jefferson County Public Health, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in planning and response activities:

- Communicate current H1N1 information to parents, students and school staff.
- We are following the advice of Jefferson County Public Health on when individuals with flu-like illness should stay home.
- We are supporting Jefferson County Public Health to monitor daily student absences in our schools.
- District nursing staff are working with school staff and students to emphasize good health practices in schools such as hand washing and respiratory hygiene to prevent the spread of disease.

12: Is Jeffco planning on closing schools if there is a case of H1N1 in a school?

A: State health officials and emergency planners have indicated that immediate school closures from one H1N1 flu case will not be the rule this school year. Guidelines and decisions regarding school closures or social distancing will be determined on a case by case basis. (Source: CDC)

Additional Resources:

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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

Colorado Help Line: 1-877-462-2911

Questions regarding H1N1 Flu are being answered in both English and Spanish.