



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health*

Flu Symptom Check List for Families and Schools

The symptoms of influenza (flu) include fever, cough, sore throat, and sometimes body aches, headache, chills and feeling tired. Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting. The most important thing that you can do to keep flu from spreading in the community is to keep your sick child at home. Use the following check list to help decide if you or someone in your family may have the flu:

☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your child have a cough?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your child have a sore throat?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your child have a headache, body aches or chills?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your child have vomiting or diarrhea?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your child have a fever of 100 degrees or more?

For more information about how to take a temperature, there is a "**Fever Fact Sheet**" at www.mass.gov/dph/swineflu.

SHOULD I KEEP MY CHILD HOME?

If you checked yes to

- fever of 100 degrees or more
and
- cough or sore throat

your child has an influenza-like illness. **Keep your child home for 7 days after symptoms start or until your child is completely well for a full day, whichever is longer.**

If you checked "yes" to only one of the questions above, or if your child is ill with other symptoms, keep your child at home at least one day to observe for other symptoms. If other symptoms develop, use the check list questions again to decide whether to continue keep the child home. Send your child back to school after he or she has been completely well for 24 hours.

When should my child go to the doctor?

Call your doctor or seek medical care if your child has trouble breathing, has behavior changes like increased restlessness, anxiety and irritability, or isn't drinking enough fluids. Be alert for skin rashes, dehydration or any other signs that your child is more uncomfortable than you would expect with the flu.

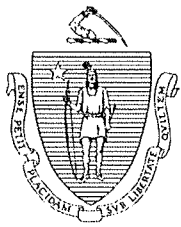


For much more information about caring for people with flu-like illness at home, please see the 33-page "Flu What You Can Do: Caring for People at Home" booklets which are posted on the MDPH website, or can be ordered by calling 617-983-6800. The booklets are available in English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, Spanish and Portuguese.

For more information and on-going updates:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health information line: 211

Massachusetts Department of Public Health influenza website: www.mass.gov/dph/swineflu



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**Home Isolation: Instructions for Patients
with Suspect, Probable and Confirmed Influenza**

Dear Patient,

You are suspected of having or were diagnosed recently with influenza (flu). This might be or is thought to be swine influenza (swine origin H1N1 influenza). Influenza can be transmitted when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is also possible to become infected by touching surfaces contaminated with the virus, and then touching your own nose or mouth. Covering coughs and sneezes and washing hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand rub are essential in stopping the spread of influenza.

During the period that you have symptoms, especially fever, it is possible for you to transmit this virus to those who have close contact with you (for example, someone living with or caring for you). To help prevent transmission of influenza virus to your close contacts, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health is asking you to **stay at home for 7 days after the day you developed a fever or for 24 - 48 hours after all symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.**

During that time, please follow these guidelines:

YOU SHOULD:

- **Stay at home for 7 days after the first day of fever or at least 24 - 48 hours after all symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.**
- Limit contact with others; avoid close contact. Persons living in the home with you should limit contact with you to the extent possible. Consider designating one person (not someone who is pregnant) as the primary person who will care for you while you're sick.
- If possible, stay in a room separate from the common areas of the house. (For example, a spare bedroom, if that's possible.)
- **ALWAYS** cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose (or cough and sneeze into the inside of your elbow). Never cough in the direction of someone else.
- **ALWAYS** wash your hands with soap or water or use alcohol-based hand rubs after coughing or sneezing or throwing a used tissue in the garbage.
- Throw out your used tissues with your regular garbage.
- Do not touch your nose, face or eyes after coughing or sneezing.
- While the virus is likely not spread very well from contact with soiled household surfaces, cleaning of surfaces that are frequently touched (such as door knobs, telephones or any other object that you sneeze or cough on) may help prevent transmission. Clean all hard surfaces such as bedside tables, bathroom surfaces, doorknobs, and childrens' toys with a standard household disinfectant. If surfaces are visibly dirty use a household cleaner first, then a disinfectant. Wash your hands after cleaning the area.

- Dirty dishes and eating utensils should be washed in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap.
- Laundry can be washed in a standard washing machine with warm or cold water and detergent. Linens and towels should also be tumble dried on a hot setting. It is not necessary to separate soiled linen and laundry your laundry from other household laundry.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.
- Seek medical care right away if your symptoms worsen (see below).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLOSE CONTACTS:

- **All persons in the household, especially those who must come in close contact with the sick person should clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub frequently and after every contact with the sick person.**
- Household members should monitor themselves closely for the development of influenza-like symptoms for 7 days after last contact. If they get sick with fever, cough, or sore throat, they should stay at home and take the same precautions listed above.
- Sick persons should not have visitors while they are ill with influenza or an influenza-like illness. If anyone who does not live with the patient must enter the home, they should avoid contact with the sick person.
- If someone else is washing the used linens (such as bed sheets and towels) for the sick person, they should use household laundry soap and tumble dry on a hot setting. Avoid "hugging" laundry prior to washing it to prevent self-contamination and clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub right after handling dirty laundry.

IF I AM SICK DO I NEED TO TAKE MEDICINE?

You should only take medicine if your doctor prescribes it for you. For people with certain underlying medical conditions, a medicine called either Tamiflu™ or Relenza™ may be recommended. You should consult with your doctor to see if you need medicine. You should also rest, drink plenty of liquids, and take medications that you would normally take to treat your symptoms, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

People who are under 18 years of age should NOT take aspirin or aspirin-containing products as this can cause a rare serious illness called Reye Syndrome in young people with the flu.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR SYMPTOMS WORSEN

If your symptoms worsen, especially if you begin to have trouble breathing, you should call your doctor or seek help at an emergency room. When going to the doctor's office or the emergency room, you should have a family member or friend drive you in a private car. Do NOT take public transportation (subway or bus).

If you go to your doctor, please contact your doctor before you leave your home and tell the doctor you have influenza-like symptoms. After arriving, go straight to the receptionist or triage nurse so that you can be put in a private room while you wait to see the doctor. You may be asked to wear a mask and you should sit away from others as much as possible. If you call an ambulance to take you to the hospital, let the operator know that you have influenza-like symptoms, and also let the ambulance crew know when they arrive.

SHOULD PERSONS I LIVE WITH OR OTHER CLOSE CONTACTS TAKE MEDICINE TO PREVENT SWINE FLU?

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is recommending preventive medication for household or other close contacts who have an underlying condition (such as certain chronic medical conditions, being immunocompromised, being younger than 2 or older than 65) that may put them at risk for more severe illness. To find out whether preventive medication such as oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) is recommended, call a doctor.

WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

For more information, call your doctor, call 211, or visit the following websites that have information about swine flu: www.mass.gov/dph/swineflu and www.cdc.gov



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Updated: May 4, 2009, 1:00 pm

H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) Information for Parent

Is it safe for my child to go to school?

At this time, state and local public health officials have advised that students can---and should-- continue to come to school, as long as they are not sick and do not have flu symptoms. Flu-like symptoms include: fever (over 100 degrees F), feverishness, cough, sore throat, runny nose, or stuffy nose. Additional symptoms may be experienced with swine flu, including body aches, feeling very tired, and sometimes vomiting or diarrhea.

The Department of Public Health has a fact sheet on H1N1 that is available on the DPH website, www.mass.gov/dph/swineflu in English and many other languages.

What should I do if my child is sick?

Flu spreads easily. If you think your child is getting the flu:

- It is very important that he/she does not go to school or other places where they might make other people sick, such as group childcare, after school programs, the mall, or sporting events.
- Call your doctor's office and let him/her know your child's symptoms and history. Your doctor will advise you whether you should come to the office. It is best to call ahead because several doctors' offices have provisions in place to respond to possible H1N1 (swine) flu cases.
- When you call to the school to notify them that your child is sick, please tell the school nurse if he/she has flu-like symptoms.
- Keep your school nurse updated on your child's medical condition.

If your doctor advises you to care for your child at home, the Centers for Disease Control has a guide on taking care of a sick person at home. It can be found at, http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance_homecare.htm.

Some tips from that guide include:

- Establish a rule in your house that everyone covers their coughs, and cleans their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often, especially after coughing and/or sneezing.
- Keep the sick person in a room separate from the common areas of the house. (For example, a spare bedroom with its own bathroom, if that's possible.) Keep the sickroom door closed.
- Keep your child at home unless necessary for medical care and don't have playmates or other guests over during this time. Your child may be able to pass the virus for 7 days or longer, so check with your doctor on recommendations for when he/she can return to school
- Try to protect other people in the home. For example, if possible, have only one adult in the home take care of the sick person (not a pregnant woman). Clean surfaces regularly with a disinfectant and maintain good ventilation. Remember to wash you hands.
- Monitor yourself and household members, including the elderly, for flu symptoms and contact a health care provider if symptoms occur.

- Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by the sick person in the trash. Wash your hands after touching used tissues and similar waste.
- Linens, eating utensils, and dishes belonging to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but importantly these items should not be shared without washing thoroughly first.

What can I do to keep my child from getting sick?

It is also important to teach your children how to reduce their risk of getting the flu and how to protect others from becoming infected.

- **Teach your children to wash their hands often.** Washing with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds is ideal (that is about as long as it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice).
- **Teach your children the proper use of hand sanitizer.** Gels, rubs, and hand wipes all work well, as long as they contain at least 60% alcohol. Hand wipes must be disposed of properly. (Monitor small children using gels as they may ingest it.)
- **Teach your children to cough or sneeze into their sleeve—not their hands!** Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of their elbow. They should wash their hands after blowing their nose or coughing into a tissue.
- **Teach your children to avoid touching their nose, mouth or eyes.** They should keep their hands away from their face.

If we all practice good hygiene, health officials believe we can limit the spread of swine flu in our schools and child care centers.

Will my child’s school be closed if there is a case of swine flu?

School leaders and state and local health officials are closely monitoring the situation and will inform parents as soon as possible if your child’s school must be closed. However, it is important to plan ahead. **Have a family discussion now to decide who would care for your child if his/her school were closed.**

If school is closed, it is important that students not gather together at another location, but rather stay home to avoid exposing other people.

How can I keep track of what is going on in my community?

Stay informed by getting up-to-date information on swine flu and what you can do to keep your family healthy from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at www.mass.gov/dph/swineflu, the Centers for Disease Control website, www.cdc.gov/swineflu/ or the 24 hour toll-free hotline that Massachusetts residents can call for general information about swine flu. To reach the hotline, dial 211.

What precautions are being taken at schools?

Precautions being taken in our schools:

- Careful hand washing is very important in preventing the spread of disease, including Swine Flu. School Nurses have been and will continue to “conduct hand washing/cover your cough” education programs district wide. They will continue to remind students and staff of their importance.
- All school nurses, food services staff, principals and school faculty staff are working to prevent Swine Flu through proactive steps, communication, and universal precautions.
- The electronic documentation system used by school nurses can be utilized for disease surveillance by tracking trends by symptoms, so that potential public health issues can be identified quickly.
- School nurses are working closely with local and state public health authorities as questions arise.

Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our children and our schools healthy.

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET

H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)

Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108

What is H1N1 influenza?

H1N1 flu, also known as “swine flu,” is a respiratory disease caused by a type of influenza virus. There are several different types of the “H1N1” flu virus. One type causes illness in pigs. Another type causes illness in people. (Occasionally, the H1N1 virus from pigs can cause illness in humans and the H1N1 virus from pigs can cause disease in humans.) Recently, a new type of H1N1 flu has been found to cause illness in people. Since March 2009, there have been many cases of this new type of H1N1 flu in the United States and around the world.

What are the symptoms of the new H1N1 flu in people?

The new H1N1 flu causes symptoms very similar to seasonal flu. Just like seasonal flu, the most common symptoms are fever, cough, and sore throat. They can also include body aches, headache, chills and feeling very tired. Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting.

How would I know if I have the new H1N1 flu?

If you have symptoms of influenza, contact your healthcare provider. He or she will decide what type of testing (if any) and treatment is right for you. Most people who are otherwise healthy, and who have mild illness, do not need to be tested. Your healthcare provider may recommend testing if you are very ill or have a high risk of complications with influenza (for example if you are over 65, immunosuppressed, or chronically ill). If you think you might have H1N1 or seasonal flu and you need to see your health care provider, you should call ahead and let them know you might have the flu. That way, precautions can be taken to avoid the spread of flu to others.

How is the new H1N1 flu treated?

People sick with any type of flu should make sure to drink enough fluids, get plenty of rest, eat healthy foods, wash hands frequently and stay home to avoid spreading the flu to other people. Drugs used to treat seasonal flu, called antivirals, can also be used to treat the new H1N1 flu. A few influenza viruses, including H1N1, have been resistant to some, but not all, of these drugs. Healthcare providers may recommend that people who are sick with a flu-like illness receive an antiviral medication.

What if I live in or have recently been to an area where the new H1N1 flu in humans has been found?

If you live in or have recently traveled to an area affected by H1N1 flu, be watchful for any flu-like symptoms. If you are experiencing any symptoms, stay home to avoid exposing others. Contact your healthcare provider and he or she will decide what type of testing (if any) and treatment is right for you.

Is there a vaccine for the new H1N1 flu?

Right now there is no vaccine to protect against H1N1 influenza. According to U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it is unlikely that the vaccine for seasonal flu will prevent the new H1N1 flu. However, the federal government is working with vaccine manufacturers to develop a vaccine that is expected to be available in several months.

How can I protect myself and others from the new H1N1 flu?

You can protect yourself and others from the new H1N1 flu the same way that you protect yourself from seasonal flu. Avoid holding, hugging, kissing, or shaking hands with anyone who has a cold or the flu. Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your nose, mouth or eyes. Clean things that are touched often like door handles, telephones, faucets, etc. **If you get sick with a flu-like illness stay home from work and school and avoid contact with others so the virus does not spread.**

All people with the new H1N1 flu and flu-like illness who are not hospitalized should stay at home to prevent spread of illness to other people.

People who have flu-like illness should do the following while recovering at home:

- Check with your health care provider(s) about any special care you might need if you are pregnant, immunosuppressed, or have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema..
- Check with your health care provider about whether or not you should take antiviral medications.
- **Stay home for at least 7 days after onset of illness; or until free of symptoms (including fever) for 24 hours, which ever is longer.** Avoid close contact with others as much as possible, even at home.
- Identify a single household member as the ill person's caregiver to minimize interactions with others.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, or electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from getting dehydrated.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer often and especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into hands.
- Never cough or sneeze in the direction of someone else.
- Be watchful for emergency warning signs (see below) that might mean you need to seek medical attention.

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), is less responsive than normal or becomes confused

If someone in my house is sick, but I'm not, do I need to stay home?

You do not need to stay home or out of school if you are not sick. However, it is recommended that you limit unnecessary contact with other people as much as possible. If you start feeling sick, especially with fever, cough, sore throat and feeling tired, you should stay at home and minimize contact with others as much as possible.

Is it safe to cook and eat pork and pork products?

Yes. It is safe to eat properly handled and cooked pork and pork products. Influenza viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get H1N1 from eating pork or pork products.

For more information about seasonal flu, pandemic flu, avian flu and H1N1, please visit the websites listed below or contact the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at 617-983-6800.

- **Massachusetts Department of Public Health website on influenza**
<http://www.mass.gov/dph/swineflu>
- **Center for Disease Control (CDC) websites on H1N1**
<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

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Talking with Your Children about the H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)

As the media coverage of H1N1 (swine flu) continues, it's likely that children will hear something about it on television or at school. Here are some tips to help you minimize your child's fears and help them stay healthy.

Flu Worries and Your Child's Mental Health

Children are happiest when they can stick with their routines, it makes them feel comfortable and safe. So keeping your child inside and not letting them play with friends when flu rumors begin to circulate may be stressful for your child. Stay informed and teach your child common sense precautions, so you can keep life as normal as possible and help your child feel more secure.

What to Say

1. Find out what they know.

Ask your child to tell you what he or she already knows about the topic. Having your child tell you what she or he has heard, instead of you telling them about it, lets you know what misconceptions or misunderstandings you may need to address.

2. Explain the facts.

Your child may have a lot of questions about H1N1 (swine flu). Clearing up your child's confusion and providing the facts may make him or her less worried.

- Tailor the information to your child's age, using words you know he or she will understand.
- You may wish to explain that H1N1 (swine flu) is a sickness that pigs can get, and that these germs can change over time to become a sickness that people can get and pass to each other.
- Be sure to explain that doctors and the government are working to protect everyone, and will be ready to treat children and families with the flu if they get sick.

3. Talk about hygiene.

Take this opportunity to remind your child about good hygiene practices, as they will not only help protect a child during a flu pandemic, but will also keep him or her healthier in general.

- Teach your child to wash hands frequently. The correct way to wash hands is to rub them together for 20 seconds using soap and water. Explain that hands pick up invisible little germs that can make people sick. The germs get inside when they touch their eyes, nose, or mouth. Washing with soap and water gets rid of the germs before they can make them sick. Another option is to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Sanitizers with at least

70% isopropyl alcohol or 60% ethyl alcohol are effective. Because hand sanitizers contain alcohol, make sure you keep them out of reach of your child when you're not using them.

- Teach your children to cover their coughs and sneezes with tissues. Explain that the germs are caught in the tissue and can't get out where they can make other people sick. Make sure they know that they should throw away the tissue in the garbage and then wash their hands. Since many children do not carry tissues, you may want to remind them that if they have no tissue, it is ok to sneeze or cough into their elbow, so their hands don't get dirty and so the germs do not spread into the air.
- Teach your children to be careful not to get too close to others if he or she feels sick, or if the other person feels sick.
- Teach your child to practice good general health habits that help them stay healthy, like eating a balanced diet, exercising, and getting enough rest.

Containing the Flu

It is important that you help your child understand the directions being given by the schools, health authorities, and government to help prevent further spread of the flu. Understanding that everyone, including children, can play a role in helping to prevent further spread of the flu can assist your child in feeling like he or she is contributing and helping the community.

If your child is not feeling well and seems to have symptoms of the flu, call your pediatrician. Follow your pediatrician's recommendations, including guidance about when to stay home from school.

Make a Plan

If a pandemic flu does emerge, anticipate that your child's routines may be interrupted. You may even find that authorities advise you to stay in your home to prevent the spread of the illness. Think about what you will need in the event that this occurs and make a plan for your family so that you are prepared. Stock up on food, water, and medications. Also have games, activities, and ways to communicate with friends (like over email) ready for your children to make the time spent confined at home less stressful. Providing developmentally appropriate art, play, and other activities can help your child express how they feel, improve your communication with them, and provide them with entertainment.

Stay informed of recent developments.

- Check <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/> or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/swineflu or visit the DPH website at www.mass.gov/dph/swineflu frequently for updates.
- Listen to radio and television, and read media stories about the pandemic and follow the instructions of your local health authorities.