

H1N1 INFLUENZA (SWINE FLU) – FAQs

FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO WEB PAGE DEDICATED TO FLU INFORMATION FOR THE CAMPUS: <http://www.unco.edu/flu/>

WHAT IS H1N1 (SWINE) FLU AND HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This new virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. Other countries have reported people sick with this new virus, which is spreading from person-to-person, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread - through sneezing or coughing. It also can spread by contact with an environment contaminated with the virus.

WHAT IS UNC DOING ABOUT H1N1 FLU?

UNC officials continue to take precautions and are monitoring the situation via updates they receive from local, state and national agencies. UNC is following [CDC guidelines for colleges and universities](#) for responding to H1N1. Campus dining rooms, residence halls, academic buildings and other high-traffic areas have and will continue to be disinfected. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed in high-traffic areas and computer labs around campus, as have informational signs about reducing the spread of flu germs.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

They are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with H1N1 flu. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE THE FLU?

If you experience a fever of 100 degrees or higher, a cough or sore throat and other seasonal flu symptoms, 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. See the CDC's "[What to Do If You Get Flu-Like Symptoms](#)" [guide](#) for more information. While it's expected that most people will recover from H1N1 within a week without medical care, if you experience severe illness or are at [high risk for flu complications](#), contact your health care provider or seek medical care.

IF I GET THE FLU, WILL I BE QUARANTINED?

The CDC does not recommend that universities quarantine individuals suspected of or diagnosed with H1N1. It recommends that you self isolate within your residence hall room, apartment, shared housing facility or home as described in the previous answer and as detailed in the CDC's "[What to Do If You Get Flu-Like Symptoms](#)" [guide](#).

WHAT HAPPENS IF I HAVE TO SELF-ISOLATE?

The CDC is recommending that students establish a “flu buddy scheme” in which students pair up to care for each other if one or the other becomes ill. Packets containing basic supplies - disposable thermometer, acetaminophen, tissues, drink mix, soup mix, mask, hand sanitizer and educational materials - will be distributed to students living in residence halls. Also, students with a UNC Meal Plan can use the "tray request" form at http://www.unco.edu/dining/forms/fy0910/bear%20care%20tray%20request_fy0910.pdf while they're self-isolated to order "to-go" meals that can be picked up and delivered by a roommate or friend.

IS CLOSING THE UNIVERSITY BECAUSE OF H1N1 FLU A POSSIBILITY?

The CDC does not recommend that universities cancel large-scale events or close completely as containment strategies. If we all are diligent in following [procedures designed to prevent the spread of any flu virus](#), negative impacts of the flu will be kept at a minimum.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I HAVE TO MISS CLASSES BECAUSE OF H1N1 FLU?

You should contact your instructor via phone or e-mail to report your absence from class and explain why. Attendance policies are determined at faculty members' discretion and outlined on their syllabi or verbally at the start of the semester. Students are encouraged to approach their professors if they need assistance catching up with class assignments, and professors are being urged to work with students to minimize the impact of missed classes.

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HOW CAN WE KEEP H1N1 FLU FROM SPREADING?

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.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them, except to seek medical care if you have severe illness or are at high-risk for flu complications.

HOW LONG CAN AN INFECTED PERSON SPREAD H1N1 FLU TO OTHERS?

People with H1N1 (swine) influenza virus infection should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possible for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods. Studies have shown that influenza virus can survive on environmental surfaces and can infect a person for up to 2-8 hours after being deposited on the surface.

IS THERE A VACCINE OR TREATMENT FOR H1N1 FLU?

A vaccine currently being developed and tested should be available this fall. Until then, the Centers for Disease Control recommend the use of prescription anti-viral drugs such as oseltamivir (brand name Tamiflu ®) or zanamivir (brand name Relenza ®) for the treatment and/or prevention of H1N1 flu.

WHO SHOULD GET THE VACCINE ONCE IT'S AVAILABLE?

According to the CDC, the groups recommended to receive the novel H1N1 influenza vaccine include:

- Pregnant women (higher risk of complications)
- Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age (those younger than 6 months can't be vaccinated and should be protected)
- Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel (reduce potential risk to vulnerable patients)
- Individuals from 6 months through 24 years of age (in close contact with each other in school and day care settings, which increases the likelihood of disease spread)
- Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza

For more detailed descriptions of groups recommended to receive the vaccine, visit

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm>.

WILL THERE BE ENOUGH VACCINE FOR EVERYONE?

The CDC does not expect that there will be a shortage of H1N1 vaccine, but availability and demand can be unpredictable. In the event that the vaccine is initially available in limited quantities, the CDC recommends that the following groups receive the vaccine before others:

- pregnant women
- people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- health care and emergency medical services personnel with direct patient contact
- children 6 months through 4 years of age
- children 5 through 18 years of age who have chronic medical conditions

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WILL THE H1N1 FLU VACCINE REPLACE THE SEASONAL FLU VACCINE?

According to the CDC, the H1N1 will not be formulated to replace this year's seasonal flu vaccine and recommends that those who would normally get a seasonal flu vaccine do so when it becomes available. CDC officials expect that this year's seasonal flu vaccine will be available earlier than normal (late-August or early-September) in order to facilitate a separate vaccination campaign for the H1N1 flu which might occur beginning in mid-October.

WHY IS H1N1 FLU SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS SWINE FLU?

Initial laboratory testing showed that many of the genes in this new virus were similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs. Further testing has shown the new virus also contains genes from strains of avian and human viruses so attaching a swine label to it is inaccurate.

IS THERE A VACCINE OR TREATMENT FOR H1N1 FLU?

A vaccine currently being developed and tested should be available this fall. If the university receives any doses, UNC will announce clinics where vaccinations will be available. Until then, the Centers for Disease Control recommend the use of prescription anti-viral drugs such as oseltamivir (brand name Tamiflu ®) or zanamivir (brand name Relenza ®) for the treatment and/or prevention of H1N1 flu.

HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT H1N1 FLU?

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#)
- [Weld County Department of Public Health and Environment](#)
- [UNC Student Health Center](#)
- [UNC Counseling Center](#)
- Toll-Free Colorado Help Line to Ask Questions about Swine Flu (between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.): (877) 462-2911
- 24-Hour Toll-Free Centers for Disease Control Help Line (800) 232-4636