

H1N1 SYMPTOMS

Fever, headache, muscle aches, diarrhea, vomiting and fatigue; cough and sore throat may also be present. People with the flu usually have fevers for two to five days, while fevers caused by other upper respiratory viruses usually resolve after 24 to 48 hours. Symptoms can vary among people and the degree of symptoms can vary as well. For some, symptoms will be mild more like cold symptoms, while for others there maybe fever and intense muscle aches. Improvement of symptoms can occur over two to five days, but may persist for a week or more. Unfortunately, weakness and fatigue may last for several weeks.

FLU DIAGNOSIS

Influenza is usually diagnosed based on the typical symptoms (fever, cough and muscle aches). Laboratory testing for influenza can be done but isn't 100% accurate. Since we know H1N1 is here, laboratory testing may not be necessary.

WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL HELP

Most people with the flu recover within one to two weeks without treatment. However, serious complications of the flu can occur. If you develop any of the following, contact your healthcare provider immediately.

- * Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- * Purple or blue discoloration of the lips
- * Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- * Signs of dehydration, such as dizziness when standing, not passing urine, or, in infants, lack of tears when crying
- * Confusion or less responsiveness than usual
- * Seizures or convulsions
- * Severe vomiting or unable to keep fluids down

HOW TO TREAT H1N1

If you think you have been infected with H1N1, do not go to school or work. Stay home to avoid spreading the virus. Unless you have worrisome symptoms as those listed above, you do not need to see a healthcare provider. If you have it, then treat the symptoms remember treating the symptoms of influenza can help you to feel better, but will not shorten the duration of the flu.

Rest until the flu is fully resolved, especially if the illness has been severe

Drink enough fluids so that you do not become dehydrated.

Acetaminophen to relieve fever, headache, and muscle aches. Aspirin, and medicines that include aspirin (i.e, bismuth subsalicylate; PeptoBismol), should be avoided, particularly in children under 18, because it can lead to a serious disease called Reye syndrome.

Cough suppressants are not usually helpful; cough usually resolves without treatment. We do not recommend cough or cold medicine for children under age six years.

Antiviral drugs- Antiviral drugs may be recommended to treat or prevent influenza. When used as a treatment, the drug does not eliminate flu symptoms, although it can reduce the severity and duration of symptoms by two to three days. Not every person with influenza requires treatment with an antiviral medication; the decision is based upon your risk of developing complications of influenza.

You are considered contagious beginning one day before symptoms appear until at least 24 hours after your fever (100F or 37.8C) has resolved (without taking anti-fever medications). Children and people with a weakened immune system may be contagious for more than seven days. An antiviral medication, such as Tamiflu, can also help to prevent infection with H1N1 flu. This treatment may be recommended if you have been in recent, close contact with someone with a suspected or confirmed case of H1N1 flu. Remember H1N1 is a virus, antibiotics will not help. If secondary bacterial infections develop such as pneumonia or sinus infections then antibiotics may be used.

More information about preventing the spread of the new swine H1N1 flu virus is available from the United States Center for Disease Control and prevention: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/general