



# Rutland Regional Medical Center

*An Affiliate of Rutland Regional Health Services*

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## **What to Do If You Get Flu-Like Symptoms** **Rutland Regional Medical Center** **H1N1-2009 Flu Information**

### **BACKGROUND**

The new H1N1 influenza virus is causing illness in the United States and countries around the world. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) expects that illnesses may continue for some time. As a result, you or people around you may become ill. If so, you need to recognize the symptoms and know what to do.

### **SYMPTOMS**

The symptoms of this new H1N1 flu virus in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people who have been infected have also reported diarrhea and vomiting. People at high risk for complications from H1N1 flu include:

- Pregnant women
- Children under the age of 5
- People with chronic medical conditions, and
- People who are immunosuppressed

### **AVOID CONTACT WITH OTHERS**

If you are sick, you may not feel well for a week or longer. You should stay home and avoid contact with other persons until you have been without a fever for more than 24 hours. If you leave the house to seek medical care, wear a mask or cover your mouth with a tissue if you cough or sneeze. You should avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness. CDC believes people with this virus are able to spread infection from one day before they develop symptoms to seven days after they get sick. Children may be contagious longer.

### **TREATMENT**

It is expected that most people will recover without needing medical care.

If you have moderate to severe illness or you are at high risk for flu complications, contact your health care provider or seek medical care. Your health care provider will determine whether testing or treatment is needed. Be aware that if the flu becomes widespread your provider may decide not to test for the flu virus.

Antiviral drugs can be given to treat those who become severely ill with influenza. The drugs are prescription medications with activity against influenza viruses, including H1N1 flu virus.

The drugs that are used for treating H1N1 are called oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) and zanamivir (Relenza®).

As the H1N1 flu spreads, these drugs may be reserved for patients who are hospitalized or are at high risk for complications. The medications for flu work best when given within 2 days of becoming ill, but may be given later for those who are very sick or at high risk for complications.

Aspirin or products containing aspirin should not be administered to patient 18 years old or younger with confirmed or suspected influenza H1N1 infection because of the risk of Reye syndrome. For relief of fever, other medications should be used such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen to relieve symptoms. Children younger than 4 years of age should not be given over the counter cold medications without first speaking with a healthcare provider.

### **EMERGENCY WARNING SIGNS**

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care. 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 interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

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

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

### **PROTECT YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR COMMUNITY**

- Stay informed
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or hand sanitizer, especially after you cough or sneeze
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness stay home. Do not return to work or school until you have been without a fever for more than 24 hours.
- Information on swine influenza is rapidly changing. As further information becomes available, we will provide updates.