

Prevent the Spread of Flu

Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC

Flu is a serious contagious disease.

Each year in the United States, on average, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized and 36,000 people die from seasonal flu complications.

This flu season could be worse.

There is a new and very different flu virus spreading worldwide among people called novel or new H1N1 flu. This virus may cause more illness or more severe illness than usual.

Flu-like symptoms include:

- fever (usually high)
- headache
- extreme tiredness
- dry cough
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle aches
- sore throat
- vomiting
- sometimes diarrhea

Who has the greatest risk of serious flu infection?

People at the greatest risk of serious flu infection include children, pregnant women, and people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease.

3 Steps To Fight The Flu

Take action to protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu.

1. Take time to get vaccinated.

- CDC recommends a yearly seasonal flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against seasonal flu. The seasonal flu vaccine protects against the three seasonal viruses that research suggests will be most common.
- A seasonal vaccine will not protect you against novel H1N1. A new vaccine against novel H1N1 is being produced and will be available in the coming months as an option for prevention of novel H1N1 infection.



2. Take everyday preventive actions.

- **Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.** Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- **Practice good hand hygiene often.** Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, 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.
- **Stay home if you are sick** for at least 24 hours after your fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible. This is to keep from making others sick.

3. Take flu antiviral drugs if recommended.

- If you get seasonal or novel H1N1 flu, antiviral drugs can treat the flu. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body.
- Antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They work best if started within the first 2 days of symptoms, and may also prevent serious flu complications.
- Antiviral drugs are not sold over-the-counter and are different from antibiotics.
- Antiviral drugs may be especially important for people who are very sick (hospitalized) or people who are sick with the flu and who are at increased risk of serious flu complications, such as pregnant women, young children and those with chronic health conditions.

FACT: The PA Department of Health will provide guidance including information on the development and availability of the Novel H1N1 flu vaccine as the influenza season progresses.