

H1N1 virus (swine flu): Facts for families of school-age children

What is H1N1 virus (swine flu)?

H1N1 virus, also known as “swine flu” and “swine Influenza A” is a virus that spreads from infected people to others through coughs and sneezes. When people cough or sneeze, they spread germs through the air or onto surfaces that other people may touch. The virus now causing human illness is a new type of swine flu that spreads from person to person. Although this new virus is called “swine flu,” it is not spread from pigs to humans or from eating pork.

People with H1N1 virus may spread the virus to others for about seven days after becoming sick.

What should we do if someone in the family has symptoms?

Whoever has symptoms should stay home from school or work and away from others. Staying home when sick stops the spread of the flu and helps you get well.

Flu symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and body aches, sometimes with vomiting or diarrhea.

Make the decision to see a health care provider as you would during a normal flu season.

If the following flu-like symptoms are mild, **medical care is not required.**

- Runny nose or nasal stuffiness
- Low-grade fever for less than 3 days
- Slight headache
- Body aches
- Slight stomach upset

If you have a high fever or a more severe cough, sore throat, body aches or are feeling very sick, see your health care provider.

How do I protect my children from getting influenza viruses?

Teach children to:

- **Wash hands often with soap and water.** Always do this after coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not nearby, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- **Cover coughs and sneezes** with their elbow or a tissue. If they use a tissue, throw it away after use and have children wash their hands.
- **Not touch eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs can spread this way.
- **Stay away from people who are sick.**

Where can I get more information?

- Call the Kittitas County Public Health Department H1N1 Flu Hotline, **(509) 962-7696**
- Check Kittitas County Public Health Department’s web site at www.co.kittitas.wa.us/health/h1n1.asp