

**Dr. Kalsman's Korner**  
**HCH Update Fall 2009**

**H1N1 (Swine Flu) and What It Means For You**

2009 H1N1 virus, commonly known as swine flu, has become widespread in our communities and therefore people need to know what to do about it. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers.

**What is swine flu?**

H1N1 is a novel flu virus that initially was thought to be similar to a flu virus commonly found in North American pigs. It has since been determined to be from different origins.

**What are symptoms of H1N1 flu?**

The symptoms of H1N1 are similar to seasonal flu, which include fever, headache, chills, fatigue, sore throat, cough, and body aches. Diarrhea and vomiting can occur, but in a smaller percentage of people.

**How to does it spread?**

Like other viruses, H1N1 spreads by direct person to person contact with someone who is sick and coughing or sneezing. People can spread the virus from 1 day prior to onset of symptoms for 5-7 days.

**How does H1N1 differ from the regular flu?**

In many respects, H1N1 is very similar to the regular flu. Certain populations, such as the elderly or chronically ill, are usually considered at risk for complications or severe illness. H1N1 differs in that elderly seem to be at less risk and younger populations and pregnant women appear to be at more risk for complications, including the rare complication of severe pneumonia and death.

**What should people with symptoms do?**

Avoid contact with others. Do not go to work or school. If you do go into public, wear a mask and wash your hands frequently. People are considered contagious for 24 hours after fever resolves.

**Are there medicines that can be given?**

There are two prescriptions medications that can be given, however recent evidence shows that H1N1 has become resistant to Tamiflu.

**Is there a vaccine available?**

A vaccine is to be released this fall in late October. It will be distributed through the health departments to local agencies and physicians. High risk groups: pregnant women, children, parents of young children, elderly or chronically ill, will get highest priority.

**Where can I get more information?**

The Center for Disease Control has extensive information at: [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu)