



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Pike County General Health District

H1N1 Influenza & Pregnant Women

What is H1N1 Influenza

H1N1 (often referred to as “swine flu”) is a new (type A) influenza virus causing illness in people. This new virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. This virus is spreading from person-to-person worldwide, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization signaled that a pandemic of 2009 H1N1 flu was underway.

Symptoms and Associated Infections

H1N1 flu virus infection can cause a wide range of symptoms, including fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe. Severe disease with pneumonia, respiratory failure and even death is possible with H1N1 flu infection. Sometimes bacterial infections may occur at the same time as or after infection with influenza viruses and lead to pneumonias, ear infections, or sinus infections.

How Influenza Spreads

The main way that influenza viruses are thought to spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are propelled through the air and deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Influenza viruses may also be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or an object and then touches their own mouth or nose (or someone else’s mouth or nose) before washing their hands.

What should I do if I get sick?

Call your doctor right away if you have flu symptoms or if you have close contact with someone who has the flu. Pregnant women who get sick with 2009 H1N1 can have serious health problems. They can get sicker than other people who get 2009 H1N1 flu. Some pregnant women sick with 2009 H1N1 have had early labor and severe pneumonia. Some have died. If you are pregnant and have symptoms of the flu, take it very seriously. Call your doctor right away for advice. If needed, he or she will prescribe an antiviral medicine that treats the flu. Have someone check in with you often if you are feeling ill. This is always a good idea.

Emergency Warning Signs

If you have any of these signs, call 911 right away: Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, a high fever that is not responding to Tylenol®, or decreased or no movement of your baby.

Information Provided Here is Based on Current CDC Recommendations as of October 13, 2009

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How is H1N1 Influenza Treated?

- 2009 H1N1 flu is treated with antiviral drugs such as Tamiflu® (oseltamivir) or Relenza® (zanamivir). Antiviral drugs are prescription pills, liquids or an inhaled powder that fight against the flu by keeping the germs from growing in your body. These medicines work best if they are taken as soon as you have symptoms of the flu. For that reason, it is important that you call your doctor as soon as you notice flu-like symptoms.
- If your doctor prescribes an antiviral to treat your flu, you will need to take it for 5 days. The medicine can make you get better faster and make your symptoms milder.
- At this time, there have been no reports to show harm to the pregnant woman or her unborn baby. Flu can cause serious illness and even death in pregnant women. Taking antiviral medicine can help prevent these severe outcomes.
- Antiviral medicines can be taken at any stage during pregnancy.
- Treat any fever right away. Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) is best for a pregnant woman to use to reduce a fever.
- Drink plenty of fluids to replace those you lose when you are sick.
- If you have had close contact with someone who is sick with the flu, your doctor may prescribe Tamiflu® or Relenza® to help prevent 2009 H1N1 flu. To prevent flu, you would take a lower dose of the medicine for 10 days.

Vaccinations

Getting a flu shot is the single best way to protect against the flu. Talk with your doctor about getting a seasonal flu shot and the 2009 H1N1 flu shot. You will need both flu shots this year to be fully protected against flu. You should get both shots as soon as they are available to protect you and your baby. The seasonal flu shot has been shown to protect both the mother and her baby (up to 6 months old) from flu-like illness.

The seasonal flu shot has been given to millions of pregnant women over many years. Flu shots have not been shown to cause harm to pregnant women or their babies. The 2009 H1N1 flu shot is made in the same way and in the same places as the seasonal flu shot.

Protect yourself, your baby, and your family

In addition to washing your hands frequently, covering your cough, practicing social distancing, staying home when you are ill, and following other good health practices, it is important for pregnant women to:

- If there is 2009 H1N1 flu in your community, pay extra attention to your body and how you are feeling. If you think you have the flu, call your doctor or clinic right away.
- If you are pregnant and you live with or have close contact with someone who has 2009 H1N1 flu, talk with your doctor about medicines to prevent flu.
- Have a plan for someone else to take care of a sick family member.

For More Information Contact:

Pike County General Health District @ www.pike-health.org or (740)947-7721