



# H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu)

The Cole County Health Department is fully aware of the developing H1N1 Influenza situation. We have increased our disease surveillance and are in constant contact with state health officials. As of May 4<sup>th</sup>, no cases of H1N1 Influenza have been identified in Cole County. If cases do appear in Cole County, your local public health agency will advise citizens if further protective measures are to be taken.

## What is H1N1 Influenza?

H1N1 Influenza is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses. People do not normally get H1N1 flu, but human infections can and do happen. In late March and early April, cases of human infection with H1N1 Influenza were reported in several countries and in locations within the United States.

## How is H1N1 Influenza spread?

H1N1 Influenza is spread like seasonal flu, when a person coughs or sneezes, sending contaminated respiratory droplets into the air where another person may inhale them. Sometimes people may become infected by touching a contaminated surface or object and then touching their own eyes, nose or mouth.

## What are the symptoms of H1N1 Influenza?

The symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and may include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, runny or stuffy nose and fatigue. Some people have reported nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with H1N1 flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 Influenza may cause underlying chronic medical conditions to worsen.

## Who is at risk for getting H1N1 Influenza?

Cases of H1N1 Influenza have most commonly occurred in people who have direct contact with infected swine and/or recently traveled to Mexico. People can also get sick from other infected people. A person who has H1N1 Influenza may be able to infect other people one day before his/her symptoms develop to seven days after showing symptoms.

## What is the best way to protect myself against H1N1 Influenza?

At this time the public is encouraged to protect themselves by following common sense, proven disease prevention methods, including—

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water.
- Keeping a distance of at least six feet from people who are sick, and
- Avoid touching your own eyes, mouth or nose.

Individuals who are sick are encouraged to protect the community by —

- Staying home while ill,
- Covering their cough or sneeze with a tissue or their sleeve, and
- Avoid sharing personal items such as utensils, drinks or a toothbrush with family members.

## What should I do if I develop symptoms of H1N1 Influenza?

People who develop flu-like symptoms AND have a history of recent travel to a location where cases of H1N1 Influenza have been confirmed OR have had close personal contact with someone who has a confirmed case of H1N1 Influenza, should contact their health care provider.

## How is H1N1 Influenza treated?

Two antiviral medications are currently proving to be effective against the strain of H1N1 Influenza currently circulating in the United States. However, antiviral medication may not be necessary for most people to recover from flu viruses. A decision can best be made by each individual's health care provider.