Pandemic H1N1 2009 (Novel H1N1 or Swine Flu)

Updated February 25, 2010

Pandemic H1N1 2009 or Novel H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This virus is spreading from person-to-person worldwide, in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) signaled that a pandemic of novel H1N1 flu was underway.

The 2009 H1N1 flu is widespread in the United States and in North Carolina. Testing for the virus is not generally performed unless a person is hospitalized in the Intensive Care Unit with a flu-like illness. People who have flu-like symptoms that cannot be attributed to another diagnosis are assumed to have H1N1 flu because it is the most common strain of flu in our community. It is expected that most people will recover without needing medical care. If you have severe illness or you are at high risk for flu complications, seek medical care. Your health care provider will determine the best course of action.

Updated Vaccine Information:

The Food & Drug Administration has approved the Pandemic H1N1 2009 Vaccine and IS WIDELY AVAILABLE FOR ALL. Contact your local Health Department for more information. Children 9 and younger will need to get 2 doses of the H1N1 vaccine, roughly 21 to 30 days apart. Children and adults 10 and older will need to get 1 dose of the H1N1 vaccine.

Due to increased risk, the following groups are highly recommended to receive the H1N1 vaccine:

- Pregnant Women
- Household contacts and caregivers of children younger than 6 months
- Healthcare workers/ Emergency Medical Services personnel
- All children aged 6 months to 24 years
- Individuals 25 to 64 with health conditions associated with high risk complications from the flu

Don’t forget to get your seasonal influenza vaccine, too!