

**H1N1 virus (swine flu)**

When to keep your child home from school

What are the symptoms of H1N1 virus (swine flu)?

Common symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, headache, tiredness and body aches. Some people may have diarrhea and vomiting.

Is it safe for my child to attend school if a case of H1N1 influenza had been identified at the school?

Because this virus appears to cause similar illness as seasonal influenza, healthy children can attend school as they would during seasonal influenza. Reducing the risk to the students and staff of a school requires that the community follow the recommendations outlined in this document. If your child has an underlying health condition, you may want to consult with your health-care provider.

When should I keep my child home from school?

Answer these questions:

1. Does your child have fever (100° Fahrenheit or greater)?
2. Does your child have a sore throat or cough?

If you answered “yes” to either question 1 or 2, keep your child home from school! Your child might have the flu.

How long should I keep my child home from school?

If your child has fever and any of the other symptoms, keep your child home for 24 hours after fever has subsided without fever-reducing medication. This guidance also applies if your child became ill prior to school starting this fall.

If you answered “yes” to only one of the questions above, or if your child appears ill with other symptoms, keep your child at home at least one day to observe for other symptoms and until completely well for 24 hours.

Should I take my child to see a health-care provider?

In most cases, people with H1N1 infections have been recovering at home just fine. Use the same judgment you would use during a normal flu season. If you would not usually see a health-care provider for the symptoms your child has now, you do not need to see a health-care provider. Call your health-care provider if your child is ill enough that you would normally see a health-care provider. If your child complains that his/her chest hurts, is having difficulty breathing, has skin and lips that are turning blue, or is becoming dehydrated, seek medical care immediately.

How do I protect my children from getting the flu?

Get your children vaccinated against influenza. It is recommended that your children receive the regular seasonal influenza vaccine. When a vaccine for the new H1N1 virus is available your children should also receive it. In addition, make sure that your children:

- **Wash hands often with soap and water.** Always wash 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. Throw dirty tissues away and have children wash their hands.
- **Do not touch eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs can spread this way.
- **Stay away from people who are sick.**

Following these four measures will help protect your child all the time.

What is H1N1 virus (swine flu)?

H1N1 virus, also known as “swine flu”, “novel H1N1 influenza” and “swine influenza A” is a virus that spreads from infected people to others through coughs and sneezes. Like the regular flu, almost everyone who gets this new virus gets better. But sometimes people get very sick, especially those with underlying health conditions.

Why are health and school officials concerned about H1N1 virus (swine flu)?

This is an outbreak of new virus. Currently, the illnesses do not seem more severe than the typical seasonal flu, but early on in the outbreak, it is important to try and prevent the spread as much as possible in case the illness becomes more severe. Even typical flu infections can be severe and should be prevented whenever possible.

How can we limit the spread of H1N1 virus (swine flu)?

The most important thing is to keep sick people away from healthy people. So if your child is sick, you must keep your child home. Staying home when sick stops the spread of the flu and helps the sick person get well.

Where can I get more information?

- Call your local public health unit.
- Call the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378 or check out the website at www.ndhealth.gov.

