

FLU FACTS ISSUE #2— Seasonal and 2009 H1N1



These two flus aren't really that different. A lot of what you already know about the seasonal flu applies to the H1N1 flu (swine flu). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), most people recover from the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu on their own, without medical attention.¹ Use this handy chart to spot symptoms and find out what you can do to lower your risk of catching either flu.

	Seasonal Flu	2009 H1N1 Flu
What is it?	A contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza A or B virus. Occurs during the regular flu season, usually in winter.	A contagious respiratory illness caused by a strain of influenza A virus. First detected in the United States in April 2009, it has occurred throughout the summer, and will likely continue throughout this winter.
SIMILARITIES		
Symptoms	Fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, runny or stuffy nose, headache, chills, and fatigue, and possible diarrhea and vomiting in children.	Same as seasonal flu, plus some instances of diarrhea and vomiting in adults.
How it spreads	Passes between people through coughing or sneezing, via germs in the air or on infected surfaces.	Same as seasonal flu.
Prevention	Wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand gel. Avoid touching doorknobs, desks, and other surfaces that might be contaminated. Stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and throw away the tissue.	Same as seasonal flu.
Treatment	If you're experiencing moderate symptoms, try over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol or Advil, and get plenty of rest and fluids. ²	Same as seasonal flu. If symptoms worsen, contact your personal physician or health care provider. (See reverse for details.)

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	Seasonal Flu	2009 H1N1 Flu
DIFFERENCES		
Who's at risk?	Seniors and very young children are most likely to catch the seasonal flu. Pregnant women, seniors, and people with chronic health conditions are at increased risk for complications.	Children and young adults are most likely to catch the H1N1 virus. Pregnant women and people with chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and heart or lung disease are most likely to be hospitalized with the flu. People 64 or older appear to have a lower risk of catching H1N1 flu.
Peak season	Usually occurs in late fall and winter. Those affected may spread the virus one day before symptoms develop and up to seven or more days after becoming ill.	Has occurred throughout the summer and will likely continue into the winter.
Vaccines	Supply is dwindling in some areas, as manufacturers have ceased production of seasonal vaccine in order to make more H1N1 vaccine. A limited amount of seasonal flu vaccine may be available in some Kaiser Permanente facilities. Call the flu hotline in your area for more information.	A separate H1N1 vaccine has been developed but supplies are limited. When more vaccine is available, Kaiser Permanente will follow CDC guidelines about which at-risk people to vaccinate first. As vaccine supplies increase, more people will be able to receive the H1N1 vaccine as per CDC guidelines. Please visit cdc.gov for the most updated information about the availability of the H1N1 vaccine.

Experiencing flu symptoms? If you feel ill, experts recommend you stay home even if your symptoms are mild. By staying home you decrease the risk of infecting others. Treat your symptoms with rest, fluids, and over-the-counter medications. And stay home until you've been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR'S OFFICE IF YOU HAVE:

- trouble breathing, wheezing, or tightness in your chest
- a deep cough with a lot of mucus or a cough lasting more than three weeks
- a very sore throat and a hard time swallowing
- severe ear pain, sudden hearing loss, or discharge from your ear
- a fever with a stiff neck or a severe headache
- a high fever
- gotten better, then gotten worse again

If you don't feel ill, there's no reason to be tested for seasonal or H1N1 flu.

For more information, visit **kp.org/flu**. Or call the Kaiser Permanente Flu Vaccination Hotline: Northern California: **1-800-KP-FLU-11 (1-800-573-5811)**, Southern California: **1-866-70-NO-FLU (1-866-706-6358)**. For regions outside of California, please refer to numbers listed on **kp.org**.

¹Information on the CDC Web site, at **cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm**.

²Kaiser Permanente does not endorse any of the products mentioned in this publication. Any trade names listed are for easy identification only.

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