

Information from the CDC about the H1N1 Flu Season

When do I Stay Home?

"Stay home when sick: Children and caregivers with flu-like illness should remain at home and away from others until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100° F [37.8° C] or greater when measured orally), or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications. Symptoms of 2009 H1N1 flu virus can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue, and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting. To the extent possible, sick individuals should stay at home and avoid contact with others until they have been without fever for 24 hours, except when necessary to seek medical care. Epidemiologic data collected during spring 2009 found that most people with 2009 H1N1 flu who were not hospitalized had a fever that lasted 2 to 4 days; this would result in an exclusion period of 3 to 5 days after onset of symptoms in most cases. CDC recommends this exclusion period whether or not antiviral medications are used."

Who Should Get the Vaccination?

All people from 6 months through 24 years of age are a [priority group for the H1N1 flu vaccine](#). Getting your child vaccinated as soon as possible is the best method for protecting him or her from the flu. **Use our [Flu Shot Locator](#) to get vaccinated where you live.**

- There are separate vaccines for seasonal flu and H1N1.
- You should have your children get both vaccinations as soon as possible.
- Flu vaccine will be available in different settings, such as vaccination clinics organized by local health departments, healthcare provider offices, schools, and other private settings, such as pharmacies and workplaces.

For more information on priority vaccinations see [CDC Advisors Make Recommendations for Use of Vaccine Against Novel H1N1](#).

Talking To Children About H1N1

Educate yourself first. Know the basic facts about H1N1—the symptoms, how it spreads, and how you can help protect yourself and your child from getting sick. Consider following some of these helpful tips:

- Share information about H1N1 in a calm, reassuring manner. Be careful not to worry children.
- Limit their exposure to media and adult conversations about H1N1.
- If your children are watching television, try to watch with them or make sure you are available to answer questions about H1N1.
- Use their questions as an opportunity to talk about [what they can do to avoid getting H1N1 flu](#).
- Keep activities as consistent and normal as possible even if your normal routine changes (due to daycare or school closures).
- Be a good example. Show children that you wash your hands frequently with soap and water. When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth or use a tissue then throw the tissue away.

See [Talking With Children About Flu](#) for more tips.

View the [Sesame Street public service announcements](#) about flu featuring Elmo.

What to Do If Your Child Gets Sick

Call your doctor right away if your child gets sick. Antiviral medications used to treat H1N1 flu in some patients work best when started within the first 2 days (48 hours) of getting sick.

- The doctor may start your child on antiviral drugs even after 48 hours when symptoms began, especially if the child has been hospitalized or is at high risk for flu-related complications.
- Children younger than 5 years old and children with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma and diabetes, may be [at higher risk for complications from flu](#). Check with your doctor about any special treatment requirements for them.
- Some [over-the-counter medicines](#) are approved for children to use to relieve flu symptoms.
- If your child has a fever, use fever-reducing medicines that your doctor recommends based on your child's age.
- A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees Celsius). If you are not able to measure a temperature, the child might have a fever if he or she feels warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.
- **Keep your sick child home until at least 24 hours after the child no longer has a fever or signs of a fever (100°F or 37.8°C) (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol®).** [Read detailed information about how long to stay away from others.](#)
- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants, Pedialyte®) to keep from being dehydrated.
- Keep your sick child in a separate room in the house as much as possible to limit contact with household members who are not sick.
- Consider having just one person be the main caregiver for the sick child.
- You can consider sending your child back to school after at least 24 hours has passed since his or her temperature returned to normal WITHOUT the use of medications.