



Essentials of H1N1 Influenza

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What is H1N1?

- H1N1 is a new strain of influenza A
- Originally called “swine flu” but now is called H1N1
- Contains components of swine, avian, and human flu
- A person does not get H1N1 from being around pigs or eating pork

Why all the attention?

- “New” sometimes is unpredictable
- Most people younger than 60 have no immunity to H1N1
 - 1/3 over 60 might have some immunity
 - Flu shot from last year will not protect you
- Unusual to see flu in summer
- H1N1 will likely still be around when seasonal flu starts appearing

Where is H1N1 being seen?

- Internationally
- United States (over a million cases estimated)
- North Carolina (hundreds of cases we know about and many more that we don't)
- Wake County
- NC State

H1N1 is not unique to NC State!

Who is getting H1N1?

- All ages
- Greatest number of people are under the age of 25

SYMPTOMS MAY INCLUDE

- fever over 100
- cough
- sore throat
- body aches
- headache
- runny or stuffy nose
- fatigue
- vomiting and diarrhea

H1N1 severity can vary

- Cases can vary from mild to severe
- Mild: can often self-treat
- More than mild: visit medical provider
- Medical conditions (diabetes, asthma, heart, lung, and kidney disease, low immunity, pregnancy) can raise risk of complications
- Some deaths

INCUBATION

- 1 to 7 days from exposure to symptoms

How Flu Spreads

- Exposure to a **SICK PERSON**
- Exposure to a **SICK THING**

Exposure to a SICK PERSON

- **Direct contact**
 - kiss, sharing drink
- **Through the air**
 - sick person sneezes or coughs
 - this sends respiratory droplets to nose or mouth of well person
 - droplets might travel as far as 6 feet

Exposure to a SICK THING

- Sick person contaminates THING
 - cough, sneeze, or touching
 - flu virus lives minutes to hours on surfaces, possibly up to 8 hours
- Well person touches THING and then brings hands to eyes, nose, or mouth

IF YOU ARE WELL

- Avoid sick PEOPLE
- Clean hands after touching THINGS
- Don't touch mouth, nose, or eyes
- Get H1N1 vaccine when available

Take Care of Your Space

- Decontaminate your space periodically
 - keyboard, phone, doorknobs, handles
- Any of a variety of household cleaners or wipes can be used

H1N1 VACCINE

What we know so far:

- Will need 2 shots (3 weeks apart?)
- Predicted availability mid October
- Supply likely limited initially
- Priority groups likely vaccinated first
- Still need to get “seasonal” flu vaccine (1 dose), in addition to H1N1
- Watch for updates about vaccine

IF YOU ARE SICK

- Remember that many illnesses that are not flu can have similar symptoms (colds, allergies)
- “Mild” symptoms: can often self-treat
- More than “mild” symptoms: contact your medical provider

What should a sick employee do?

- Contact your medical provider if symptoms are more than mild or if diagnosis is not certain
- Follow medical provider's advice about treatment and self-isolation
- Notify the appropriate person at NC State of your illness and outage

How Flu is Diagnosed

- You might be treated as “presumptive flu” based on symptoms & no testing
- Rapid flu test may or may not detect this new strain of flu
- Currently if rapid flu test is positive for influenza A, assumed to be H1N1
- Specialized test that can take days is sometimes done to confirm H1N1
(not done at most medical practices)

Flu Treatment

- Over-the-counter medications for fever, aches, cough, sore throat, congestion
- Prescription anti-viral meds sometimes given to shorten course (Tamiflu or Relenza)
- Antibiotics do not treat flu but may be given for complications (such as pneumonia, sinus, or other infections)

Previous Recommendation about Self-Isolation

- Previously: *“Stay away from school & work for 7 days after onset of symptoms or 24 hours after last symptom gone, whichever is longest.”*
- CDC is still recommending above for health care settings but has discontinued the 7 day recommendation for community settings, such as schools

Latest CDC recommendations for schools, businesses, and community settings:

- ***CDC recommends that people with influenza-like illness remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees), or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. CDC August 5, 2009***
- **Fever often lasts 2-4 days, so self-isolation for many people will average 3-5 days**

Contagious for how long?

- A person with H1N1 can shed virus and potentially infect others from 1 day before symptoms start and for about 7 days after
- More likely to shed virus during days with fever
- ***Continue to practice good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene (after self-isolation over) CDC August 5, 2009***

Precautions for the Sick

- Cover mouth and nose with tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Discard tissue
- **Friends don't cough on friends!**
- Frequently wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Decontaminate touched THINGS

What should a sick employee do about self-isolation?

- Stay home from work, school, or socializing for at least 24 hours after fever resolves (has no fever while off fever-reducing medication)
- Average self-isolation will be 3-5 days
- Essential errands only
- Consider staying home even after fever gone if significant symptoms remain, such as impressive cough or exhaustion

How can a sick person self-isolate if there are others in the residence?

- Minimize contact with well people in residence
- Try to spend time in a room away from shared space
- If visiting shared space, use tissue for sneeze or cough, then discard. Clean hands. Frequently decontaminate things in shared space
- Well people might stay somewhere else
- Well people might take prescription anti-viral medication to prevent flu

What is predicted about outages due to H1N1 at NC State?

- Expect outages of faculty, staff, and students since H1N1 infection is being seen throughout USA, NC, and Wake County
- Assume that no person is immune unless the person has already had H1N1 infection
- A person is as likely to get exposed to H1N1 in the community as at NC State

What can employees do to prepare for being out sick?

- Know who to notify if you will be out sick
- Plan for a possible 1 week outage
- Assume that you will be too ill to do any job-related activities while away from work
- Have a plan so a co-worker can continue vital portions of your job during your absence

Who should sick person notify, in addition to supervisor?

- Sick person was considered contagious a day before symptoms and for about 7 days after
- Notify those who had close contact while contagious
 - Household contacts
 - Significant other
 - Co-workers who worked in close proximity to sick person or frequently shared items

If someone is out with H1N1, shouldn't all co-workers be notified?

- Only those co-workers in close contact should be notified
- **Flu is common enough in the community that everyone should follow prevention advice daily and self-monitor for symptoms, whether in the community or on campus, whether there is a sick co-worker or not, and while H1N1 is reported in community**

If supervisor notifies close contacts, what should the supervisor say?

- To maintain confidentiality, use generic terms rather than the employee's name, if possible
- Do not use person's name in an e-mail to others
- “A person you work with has been diagnosed with presumed H1N1 influenza. There is no way to be certain who, if anyone, might have been exposed, but you are encouraged to self-monitor for flu symptoms for a few days.”

If a co-worker went home with flu, should their space be sanitized?

- Routine cleaning within the university is ongoing, regardless of whether there is H1N1 activity
- Flu virus might survive up to 8 hours on surfaces
- If an employee went home sick in the last 8 hours, they were likely too ill to clean space before going home
- Consider sanitizing shared items that others are now touching (keyboard, phone)
- Clean hands after touching items that cannot be sanitized and avoid touching face

What H1N1 message can those in leadership roles share?

- **Communicate early in the semester that employees should stay away from work if they are ill with influenza and seek medical attention, when appropriate**
- Encourage those who are well to
 - avoid the sick,
 - frequently clean hands and personal space
 - carry hand sanitizer

All Students, Faculty, Staff should...

- Exercise precautions to protect against flu, no matter where you are, and whether you know someone with flu or not
- Watch for information about H1N1 vaccine
- Self-monitor for symptoms while H1N1 activity is being reported
- Seek medical care as recommended
- Self-isolate as recommended

For more information about H1N1

- www.ncsu.edu/student_health
- www.flu.gov

For questions about this material:

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