



H1N1 (2009) FLU

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE H1N1 FLU? The H1N1 (2009) flu virus is a swine flu, which is a respiratory disease found in pigs. It is caused by an Influenza Type A virus. Like humans, pigs can spread the flu to each other and to other living creatures, including humans.

IS THE SWINE FLU A PANDEMIC? No. Not yet at least. The World Health Organization has raised the Pandemic Alert Level to Level 5, meaning there is increased human-to-human spread. At this time it appears that in most nations affected the disease is remaining in a mild form. An Alert Level 6 would indicate that the WHO has declared an influenza pandemic.

HOW DO HUMANS CATCH THE H1N1 FLU? Humans can contract the H1N1 virus much as they do human influenza (type B) or bird flu (type A): through contact with airborne respiratory secretions. Usually this has to be through close contact.

WHAT TYPE OF VIRUS IS THIS? This version of the H1N1 virus has been classified as an type A virus. It should be noted that the 1918 Spanish flu was also an H1N1 virus, but is thought to have originated in birds, so there are subtle differences. The vaccine for the seasonal flu vaccine will not protect those who received it against this virus.

DO I NEED TO WORRY? There is no need to panic. In most instances those who have been infected have either been to Mexico or in direct contact with someone who has. Again, most cases in the US to date have been mild.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF? As with seasonal flu the best way to protect yourself is with basic public health practices: Wash your hands regularly, especially if you have touched a common surface such as a door knob, money, stair rail, etc. Always cover your cough or sneeze. If you don't feel well stay home. Never send your child to school or daycare when they are ill. If you are worried about catching the virus, avoid crowds or stay at home.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS? Basically the same as seasonal flu: high fever, head and body aches; dry hacking cough; chills and fatigue. Usually symptoms appear suddenly.

IF I HAVE SYMPTOMS, SHOULD I GO TO THE DOCTOR OR EMERGENCY ROOM? At this time we are advising people with mild symptoms to self medicate and stay at home - to avoid unnecessary spread of the virus. However, if your symptoms are moderate to severe, contact your physician immediately.

IS THERE A VACCINE FOR THE H1N1 INFLUENZA VIRUS? Not yet. It takes six to eight months to develop a vaccine for a new strain of influenza.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION? Our Website: www.rosscountyhealth.com, or call the ODH Swine Flu Hotline, 866-800-1404, Monday-Friday, 8 am to 5 pm.