



5 Things Parents Need to Know About H1N1 Flu

Department of Health & Human Services

Right now, parents everywhere are preparing for a new school year. But if you're a parent, you need to add one more item to that back-to-school checklist: what to do if someone in your family gets the flu.

This fall we're not only facing the regular seasonal flu, but also the H1N1 virus, a potentially more dangerous strain. As a parent, you need to be aware of 5 basic steps to keep your family healthy and keep flu from spreading in your community.

- 1. Make prevention the first line of defense.**
Everyone needs to make it a routine to wash their hands often with soap and water. Remind your family to cough or sneeze into their sleeves or into a tissue, not in their hands. These steps are easy, but they only work if every member of the family participates.
- 2. Make sure you and your entire family get vaccinated.**
Vaccines are the best means we have to make sure that families and communities are protected from flu. Vaccines for both H1N1 and seasonal flu will be available this fall. Scientists at the National Institutes of Health, the CDC, and the Food and Drug Administration are working around the clock with vaccine manufacturers to make sure that flu vaccines are safe and effective.
- 3. Keep your children home if they're sick.**
If you're sick, stay home as well. H1N1 spreads rapidly among kids and young adults; it's especially risky if you're pregnant. Look for these symptoms: Similar to seasonal flu, with H1N1 you'll get a fever, cough, sore throat, stuffy nose; achiness, headache, chills and fatigue. Sometimes H1N1 causes diarrhea and vomiting. Both H1N1 and seasonal flu can be severe and occasionally deadly.
- 4. Start planning now in the event that one of your kids gets the flu.**
Ask yourself these questions: If you work, have you made arrangements for child care? Have you talked with your employer about what to do in case you need to be out?
- 5. Go to flu.gov for the latest information on H1N1 and seasonal flu.**
Flu.gov is a one-stop government wide resource with planning tools for parents to get a jump start on the 2009 flu season.