

Public Health Emergency Preparedness
BRAZORIA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

PUBLIC HEALTH MATTERS

September 2009



MISSION STATEMENT

BRAZORIA COUNTY WILL BE PREPARED FOR AND READY TO RESPOND TO A HEALTH AND MEDICAL EVENT DUE TO EITHER A MAN-MADE OR NATURAL DISASTER

Inside this issue:

H1N1 FAQ	2
Care of a sick person at home	3
Medications for the flu	4
Seeking emergency care	5
H1N1 Vaccine	6
Priority Groups for H1N1 Vaccine	7

TRAINING GALORE FOR BRAZORIA COUNTY GROUPS ABOUT H1N1 PANDEMIC INFLUENZA



On August 21st, PHEP staff met with representatives from law enforcement agencies to outline the PHEP response plan to a bioterrorism event.



On August 28th, School Nurses from BISD, C-BISD, Sweeny ISD, Angleton ISD, Pearland ISD, Danbury ISD and Damon ISD learned about disaster response, use of NIMS structure and H1N1 Influenza Pandemic.



School District Superintendents and other Administrative personnel met with the PHEP team on August 28th to discuss plans and recommendations to decrease the number of school children who are infected with H1N1 Influenza and guidelines from the Texas Department of State Health Services and the CDC regarding schools.



Fred Ortiz, Director of the Lake Jackson Emergency Medical Service, Inc, trained school nurses on pre-hospital care and triage using the START system.

H₁N₁ PANDEMIC INFLUENZA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Is this the same thing as the “Swine” flu?

A: Yes. It was first called the Swine Flu, but is now called the Novel H1N1 Influenza.

Q: Is it safe to eat pork?

A: Yes. You can not get H1N1 Influenza from eating pork.

Q: How is H1N1 flu different from regular flu?

A: Regular or seasonal flu is also caused by a virus. The seasonal flu season generally begins in the fall and ends in the spring. You must get a flu shot each year to protect against seasonal flu.

Q: Where did the H1N1 flu virus come from?

A; The H1N1 virus is a result of changes of the virus over time. The H1N1 virus is a NEW virus. No one has natural immunity to the H1N1 virus.

Q: How can I keep from getting the flu?

A: The best way to protect yourself from both seasonal and H1N1 flu is to wash your hands frequently, cough into your sleeve or a tissue (throw away the tissue) & then wash your hands.

Q: Should I stay home from work if I am sick?

A: Yes. You should stay home from work or school until you are fever free without taking fever reducing medicine. If you work in a health care field, you should stay home for 7 days.

Q: What are the symptoms of the flu?

A: Fever over 100.4 with a cough or sore throat. The average fever in people with the flu is 102 degrees.

Q: How is it spread?

A: The virus is spread from person to person.

Q: Where can I get more information?

A; Flu.gov or Texasflu.gov



Dr. Harry Overstreet provides information to a meeting with municipalities on pandemic influenza preparation. The meeting was held on August 13th.

Interim Guidance for Novel H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu): Taking Care of a Sick Person in Your Home

August 5, 2009 5:00 PM ET

This document has been updated in accordance with the [CDC Recommendations for the Amount of Time Persons with Influenza-Like Illness Should be Away from Others](#) . This document provides interim guidance and will be updated as needed.

Novel H1N1 flu virus infection (formerly known as swine flu) can cause a wide range of symptoms, including fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with novel H1N1 flu. Like seasonal flu, novel H1N1 flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe. Severe disease with pneumonia, respiratory failure and even death is possible with novel H1N1 flu infection. Certain groups might be more likely to develop a severe illness from novel H1N1 flu infection, such as pregnant women and persons with chronic medical conditions. Sometimes bacterial infections may occur at the same time as or after infection with influenza viruses and lead to pneumonias, ear infections, or sinus infections.

The following information can help you provide safer care at home for sick persons during a flu outbreak or flu pandemic.

The main way that influenza viruses are thought to spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are propelled through the air and deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Influenza viruses may also be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or an object and then touches their own mouth or nose (or someone else's mouth or nose) before washing their hands.

People with novel H1N1 flu who are cared for at home should:

- check with their health care provider about any special care they might need if they are pregnant or have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema
- check with their health care provider about whether they should take antiviral medications
 - keep away from others as much as possible. This is to keep from making others sick. Do not go to work or school while ill
 - stay home for at least 24 hours after fever is gone, except to seek medical care or for other necessities. (Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- get plenty of rest
- drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated
- cover coughs and sneezes. Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often and especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into hands
- wear a facemask – if available and tolerable – when sharing common spaces with other household members to help prevent spreading the virus to others. This is especially important if other household members are at high risk for complications from influenza.

Be watchful for emergency warning signs that might indicate you need to seek medical attention.

Medications to Help Lessen Symptoms of the Flu

Antiviral medications can sometimes help lessen influenza symptoms, but require a prescription. Most people do not need these antiviral drugs to fully recover from the flu. However, persons at higher risk for severe flu complications, or those with severe flu illness who require hospitalization, might benefit from antiviral medications. Antiviral medications are available for persons 1 year of age and older. Ask your health care provider whether you need antiviral medication.

Influenza infections can lead to or occur with bacterial infections. Therefore, some people will also need to take antibiotics. More severe or prolonged illness or illness that seems to get better, but then gets worse again may be an indication that a person has a bacterial infection. Check with your health care provider if you have concerns.

Warning! Do *not* give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to children or teenagers who have the flu; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome. For more information about Reye's syndrome, visit the [National Institute of Health website](#).

- Check ingredient labels on over-the-counter cold and flu medications to see if they contain aspirin.
- Children 5 years of age and older and teenagers with the flu can take medicines *without* aspirin, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®), to relieve symptoms.
- Children younger than 4 years of age should **NOT** be given over-the-counter cold medications without first speaking with a health care provider.
- The safest care for flu symptoms in children younger than 2 years of age is using a cool-mist humidifier and a suction bulb to help clear away mucus.
- Fevers and aches can be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®) or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Examples of these kinds of medications include:

Generic Name	Brand Name(s)
Acetaminophen	Tylenol®
Ibuprofen	Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®
Naproxen	Aleve

- Over-the-counter cold and flu medications used according to the package instructions may help lessen some symptoms such as cough and congestion. Importantly, these medications will not lessen how infectious a person is.

Check the ingredients on the package label to see if the medication already contains acetaminophen or ibuprofen before taking additional doses of these medications—don't double dose! Patients with kidney disease or stomach problems should check with their health care provider before taking any NSAIDs.

Check with your health care provider or pharmacist if you are taking other over-the-counter or prescription medications not related to the flu. For more information on products for treating flu symptoms, see the [FDA website](#).

When to Seek Emergency Medical Care

In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

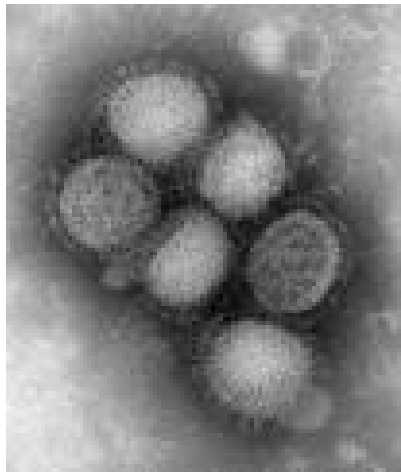
In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

How you can PREVENT *the* FLU

Vaccination is not the only way to combat the flu.
Use these simple tips to *prevent* the flu before it happens.



H1N1 Swine Influenza Virus



Avoid close contact.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

Clean your hands.

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.



Stay home when you are sick.

If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

Cover your mouth and nose.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germ and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

H1N1 VACCINE

Q: What are the plans for developing novel H1N1 vaccine?

A. Vaccines are the most powerful public health tool for control of influenza, and the U.S. government is working closely with manufacturers to take steps in the process to manufacture a novel H1N1 vaccine. Working together with scientists in the public and private sector, CDC has isolated the new H1N1 virus and modified the virus so that it can be used to make hundreds of millions of doses of vaccine. Vaccine manufacturers are now using these materials to begin vaccine production. Making vaccine is a multi-step process which takes several months to complete. Candidate vaccines will be tested in clinical trials over the few months.

Q. When is it expected that the novel H1N1 vaccine will be available?

A. The novel H1N1 vaccine is expected to be available in the fall. More specific dates cannot be provided at this time as vaccine availability depends on several factors including manufacturing time and time needed to conduct clinical trials

Q. Will the seasonal flu vaccine also protect against the novel H1N1 flu?

A. The seasonal flu vaccine is not expected to protect against the novel H1N1 flu.

Q. Can the seasonal vaccine and the novel H1N1 vaccine be given at the same time?

A. It is anticipated that seasonal flu and novel H1N1 vaccines may be administered on the same day. However, we expect the seasonal vaccine to be available earlier than the H1N1 vaccine. The usual seasonal influenza viruses are still expected to cause illness this fall and winter. Individuals are encouraged to get their seasonal flu vaccine as soon as it is available.

Q. Who will be recommended as priority groups to receive the novel H1N1 vaccine?

A. CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has recommended that certain groups of the population receive the novel H1N1 vaccine when it first becomes available. These key populations include pregnant women, people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age, healthcare and emergency medical services personnel, persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old, and people ages of 25 through 64 years of age who are at higher risk for novel H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

We do not expect that there will be a shortage of novel H1N1 vaccine, but availability and demand can be unpredictable. There is some possibility that initially the vaccine will be available in limited quantities. In this setting, the committee recommended that the following groups receive the vaccine before others: pregnant women, people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age, health care and emergency medical services personnel with direct patient contact, children 6 months through 4 years of age, and children 5 through 18 years of age who have chronic medical conditions.

The committee recognized the need to assess supply and demand issues at the local level. The committee further recommended that once the demand for vaccine for these prioritized groups has been met at the local level, programs and providers should begin vaccinating everyone from ages 25 through 64 years. Current studies indicate the risk for infection among persons age 65 or older is less than the risk for younger age groups. Therefore, as vaccine supply and demand for vaccine among younger age groups is being met, programs and providers should offer vaccination to people over the age of 65.

Q. Where will the vaccine be available?

A. Every state is developing a vaccine delivery plan. Vaccine will be available in a combination of settings such as vaccination clinics organized by local health departments, healthcare provider offices, schools, and other private settings, such as pharmacies and workplaces.

Q. Are there other ways to prevent the spread of illness?

A. Take everyday actions to stay healthy.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Stay home if you get sick. CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures. These measures will continue to be important after a novel H1N1 vaccine is available because they can prevent the spread of other viruses that cause respiratory infections.

H1N1 Vaccine Priority Groups



Pregnant
Women



Children and
young adults
from 6
months to 24



Household contacts of
infants under
6 months of age



People aged 25 to
64 years with un-
derlying medical
conditions (e.g.



Health Care Workers
& Emergency Medical
Responders

Combined, these groups equal approximately 178,000
individuals in Brazoria County.

