

H1N1

The latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control includes the following:

Centers for Disease Control

Exclusion Period:

- On August 5, CDC revised its recommendation about how long people with flu-like illness should stay home and away from other people to prevent spreading the flu.
- CDC now recommends that those with flu-like illness stay home until at least 24 hours after their fever is gone, without using fever-reducing medicines like acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- Previously, CDC had recommended that people stay home for seven days after they became ill or 24 hours after they had no symptoms, whichever is longer.
- The change in recommendation is based on what we learned about the new H1N1 virus during spring 2009 and is designed to decrease the risk of spreading the flu while also reducing the disruption to society caused by people staying home for long periods.
- During spring 2009, most people infected with the new H1N1 flu had fevers for 2-4 days.
- By tailoring the recommendation to how long someone with flu has a fever, people with less severe illnesses will be able to return to their daily lives sooner, while also protecting others from the flu during their most contagious period.
- The new recommendation applies to camps, schools, businesses and other community settings where most people are not at high risk for flu complications.
- It's important that those with flu-like illness stay home while sick, except to seek medical care, and avoid contact with other people.
- Because not everyone ill with the new H1N1 flu will have a fever, it is important for everyone to wash their hands frequently and follow good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette so they don't unknowingly infect others.

Recommendations for Outbreak Similar to Spring 2009

Hand Hygiene/Respiratory Etiquette

- First and foremost, the new guidelines emphasize the importance of promoting basic foundations of preventing flu: getting vaccinated, frequent hand washing and soap and water when possible, covering noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and staying home when sick.

Exclusion Period

- Those with flu-like illness should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, without use of fever-reducing medicines and regardless of whether or not they are using antiviral drugs.
- Those are sick should stay in the home during this period, except to seek necessary medical care and should avoid contact with others.

Separate ill Students and Staff

- Students and staff who appear to have flu-like illness should be sent to a room separate from other students until they can be sent home. CDC also recommends they wear a surgical mask if possible.