

# 2009 H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)

The following is general information about the 2009 H1N1 flu (influenza). For the latest news including flu vaccine information, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Web site at [www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/swineflu.htm](http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/swineflu.htm).

## What is 2009 H1N1 flu?

2009 H1N1 flu is a new influenza A virus first discovered in April 2009. Since then it has spread around the world and has been called different names. You may have heard it called swine flu, pandemic flu, or novel H1N1 flu.

## When does 2009 H1N1 flu spread?

2009 H1N1 is expected to spread along with other flu viruses much of this year and next. Seasonal flu viruses usually spread in the fall, winter, and early spring. 2009 H1N1 flu may be the most common form of flu virus causing infection in children this flu season.

## How is 2009 H1N1 flu spread?

The 2009 H1N1 virus is mainly spread in 2 ways.

1. Through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes
2. By touching contaminated surfaces or objects like doorknobs, money, and toys and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth

You cannot get the swine flu from pork or pork products.

## Signs or symptoms

Symptoms of the 2009 H1N1 flu are similar to other flu viruses and include

- A sudden fever, possibly with chills
- Stuffy nose and cough

Older children may complain of

- Scratchy, sore throat
- Muscle aches and discomfort
- Headache

Some children have

- Vomiting and diarrhea

## Call the doctor if your child...

- Is younger than 3 months and has a fever (rectal temperature of 100.4°F [38°C] or higher)
- Is sick and has a serious chronic health condition, including lung or heart problems, asthma, diabetes, kidney problems, a weakened immune system, or a serious neurologic or neuromuscular condition (not ADHD or autism)
- Is more sleepy than usual or not waking up or acting normally
- Has little or no energy to play or keep up with daily activities
- Is not drinking enough fluids to make urine
- Has trouble breathing or is breathing fast
- Is very irritable and cannot be comforted
- Has skin color that is blue or gray

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The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

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## What to do for 2009 H1N1 flu

- **Keep germs from spreading.**
  - Make sure everyone washes their hands often. Wash with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds (about as long as 1 to 2 verses of the “Happy Birthday” song). Alcohol-based hand rubs should be limited to times when soap and water are not available. Keep these products out of the reach of children and supervise their use.
  - Cough and sneeze into a tissue or into your elbow or upper sleeve.
  - Use tissues for wiping runny noses and to catch sneezes. Throw them in the trash right after each use.
  - Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
  - Anyone who is sick should stay home and limit contact with others.
  - Keep a child home from school or child care until the fever is gone for at least 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medicine. Normal body temperature is different for each child and may range from 97°F (36.1°C) to 100.3°F (37.9°C). In general, a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher may be a sign of a fever. *Note:* Schools and child care centers may have different rules about when children need to stay home.
- **Check with your child’s doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about your child’s medicine.**
  - For fever or body aches, your child’s doctor may suggest acetaminophen (like Tylenol) or ibuprofen (like Advil or Motrin). **NEVER** give your child aspirin.
  - Antiviral medicine for flu generally is given to children who are at higher risk of flu complications (such as those with chronic disease or cancer) or are in close contact with a person who has the 2009 H1N1 flu.
  - Visit the AAP Web site regularly for the latest information on the 2009 H1N1 vaccine. In the meantime, have your child immunized to protect against seasonal influenza as soon as that vaccine is available.
- **Other ways to help your child**
  - Make sure your child drinks plenty of liquids to avoid getting dehydrated.
  - Encourage and help your child rest.
  - Stay informed because information is continually being updated. Know what’s going on in your area and follow the recommendations of public health authorities.

**From your doctor**

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