

# Information about influenza A (H1N1)

## ✓ What is the new influenza A (H1N1)?

This is a new influenza A (H1N1) virus that has never before circulated among humans. This virus is not related to previous or current human seasonal influenza viruses. First detected in Mexico in April, 2009, it has spread to many countries in the World. It is called as Pandemic H1N1 2009 virus by WHO.

## ✓ How do people become infected with the virus?

The virus is spread from person-to-person. It is transmitted as easily as the normal seasonal flu and can be passed to other people by exposure to infected droplets expelled by coughing or sneezing that can be inhaled, or that can contaminate hands or surfaces.

There are no known instances of people getting infected by exposure to pigs or other animals. The place of origin of the virus is unknown.

## ✓ What are the signs and symptoms of infection?

Signs of influenza A (H1N1) are flu-like, including fever, cough, headache, muscle and joint pain, sore throat and runny nose, and sometimes vomiting and diarrhoea.

## ✓ Are there medicines to treat this flu?

Yes. Necessary medicines in sufficient quantity are available. The Government has in the designated hospitals stored medicines if required. It is strongly advisable not to take medicines of your own, as it will lower your immunity.

## ✓ How to keep away from getting the flu?

First and most important: Follow simple steps as cough etiquettes (covering mouth & nose with handkerchief or tissue paper while coughing), stay at least an arm's length from persons coughing or sneezing, avoid gathering and wash your hands frequently. Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.

## ✓ Is it safe to travel?

Yes. WHO is not recommending travel restrictions related to the outbreak of the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 virus. People who are ill should delay travel plans. Returning travelers who become ill should contact their health care provider.

## ✓ What about using a mask? What does WHO recommend?

If you are not sick you do not have to wear a mask.

If you are caring for a sick person, you can wear a mask when you are in close contact with the ill person and dispose of it immediately after contact, and cleanse your hands thoroughly afterwards.

If you are sick and must travel or be around others, cover your mouth and nose.

Using a mask correctly in all situations is essential. Incorrect use actually increases the chance of spreading infection.

## Do's and Don'ts for the General Public

### DO



Wash your hands



Avoid crowded places



Stay more than an arm's length from persons afflicted with flu



Get plenty of sleep



Drink plenty of water and eat nutritious food

### DO NOT



Shake hands or hug in greeting



Spit in public



Take medicines without consulting a physician

### FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE SICK



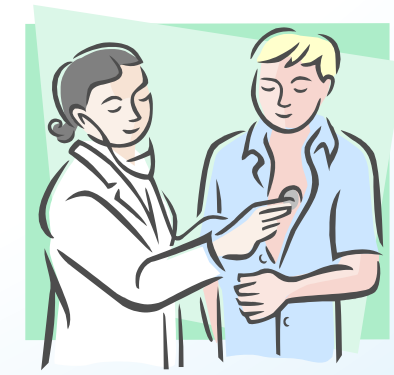
Stay home and limit contacts with others as much as possible



Rest and take plenty of liquids



Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze



Seek medical advice if needed.

References: 1. Fact Sheet on Influenza A [H1N1].Ministry of health and family welfare, Government of India . 2. Draft Action Plan Pandemic Preparedness and Response for Managing Novel Influenza A H1N1.Ministry of health and family welfare, Government of India. 3. What is the new influenza A (H1N1)? Frequently asked questions.WHO (11 June 2009). 4. What can I do? Frequently asked questions.WHO (11 June 2009). 5. Is it safe to travel? Frequently asked questions, WHO(7 May 2009).



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