



COUNTY OF MARATHON

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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2009 H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) Fact Sheet for Parents/Guardians September 17, 2009

The 2009 H1N1 Flu continues to be present in our community. Currently, a vaccine is being made to protect people from the H1N1 Flu. Marathon County Health Department is asking families to make good decisions in determining when their child should stay home from school and extracurricular activities. This fact sheet provides you current information about H1N1 Flu and what may mean for you and your family.

What is H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)?

H1N1 (Swine Flu) is a new virus and was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009.

How does H1N1 Flu spread?

H1N1 is spread just like seasonal influenza, primarily from person-to-person through coughing or sneezing.

Is it different from regular, seasonal flu?

The major difference is that this is a new virus and few people have immunity at this time. With seasonal flu, many people are immune because they have been vaccinated.

H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) seems very similar to season flu. For most people, this means they will be ill for a few days and recover on their own. People who are most vulnerable to this disease include:

- Pregnant women
- Infants
- Children between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old
- People with chronic diseases, especially those with immune disorders, respiratory diseases (such as asthma), or diabetes

One thing that appears to be different from seasonal influenza is that adults older than 64 years have not gotten ill from the H1N1 virus.

Because we never know when we're in the presence of someone who may have the flu, it is important for all of us to take precautions to reduce the spread of the flu virus.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)?

The common symptoms of H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) are similar to the seasonal influenza. Fever of 100°F or greater AND at least one of the following: cough, sore throat, body aches or headache. A number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

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How soon do symptoms appear after exposure?

Usually 1-7 days.

What do parents need to do if their child has symptoms?

If your child has any of the symptoms listed above, keep them home from child care, school, and community events to avoid exposing other persons. Your child needs to stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone, without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

Call your doctor about the need for H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) testing and anti-viral treatment. Your doctor may want to see your child if they are under the age of 5 or have a health condition that make them more vulnerable to the disease.

How long can an infected person spread the flu to other people?

Most people can spread the virus 1 day before getting sick to 5-7 days after. This can be longer in some people, especially for children and people with weakened immune systems.

How can you protect your child and family?

These few simple steps can prevent you from getting the virus, or from giving the virus to others.

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.
- **Stay away from sick people** until they are better.
- **Stay home if you or your child is sick** for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- **Keep yourself and your child away from others** while you feel sick as much as possible to keep making others sick.

When will the vaccine be available?

The H1N1 Flu vaccine will be available in the fall 2009. The vaccine will be available to everyone, but we want to vaccinate those people in the target populations who are most vulnerable to this disease. We do not expect that there will be a shortage of 2009 H1N1 vaccine, but availability and demand can be unpredictable.

Marathon County Health Department is working in partnership with health care providers and school district staff to coordinate vaccination (flu shot) clinics at your school and community. Clinics will be located throughout the county to assure greater access to the vaccine. The dates will be communicated widely through your school, websites and local media. Vaccine will also be available through your doctor.

More questions?

More information is available at <http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/> . There are also excellent resources at <http://www.pandemic.wisconsin.gov/> or <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>.

Feel free to call the Health Department at 715-261-1900 and we will be glad to answer your questions.