

Seasonal and H1N1 Flu Tips: What Pregnant Women Should Know

The H1N1 influenza (flu) virus, formerly known as Swine Flu, is currently causing illness in people throughout the United States and countries around the world, causing the World Health Organization to declare a pandemic. The following information was obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We encourage you to keep up-to-date by visiting www.cdc.gov. The following information can be used for seasonal flu *and* H1N1 flu.

HOW WILL H1N1 AFFECT ME WHILE I AM PREGNANT?

- According to the CDC, pregnant women are more likely to get sick and have more health problems from seasonal flu. These problems include early labor or severe pneumonia. H1N1 may also cause the same health problems.
- Current recommendations are for pregnant women to be the first to receive the H1N1 vaccine. The CDC recommends that pregnant women receive the [voluntary] H1N1 flu vaccine as soon as it is available.

PROTECT YOURSELF, YOUR BABY, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOUR COMMUNITY EVERY FLU SEASON – THERE IS A LOT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT FLU!

- Stay informed – visit www.cdc.gov or www.medinahhealth.org. Tip sheets on how to care for someone sick with the flu at home, what to do if you get sick, and emergency preparedness checklists are available. Visit the Medina County Health Department website at www.medinahhealth.org for copies or call for copies at 330-662-0513.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze – use your sleeve or a tissue.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, especially after possible exposure to the flu virus, and after coughing or sneezing into a tissue. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth – germs spread this way.
- Get prepared – have an emergency preparedness kit and plan at home.
- Get your seasonal flu shot. Contact the Medina County Health Department, Division of Public Health Nursing, for more details, or check our website for the latest flu clinic schedule.



OTHER WAYS TO REDUCE RISK FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

- Minimize contact with sick individuals.
- Avoid, whenever possible, crowded settings in communities having outbreaks of influenza A (H1N1) virus.

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WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF H1N1?

Symptoms are like seasonal flu and include the following:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Headaches
- Chills and fatigue
- Sometimes, diarrhea and vomiting (H1N1, not seasonal)



Flu can be very serious in young babies. Babies who are breastfed do not get as sick and are sick less often from the flu, than do babies who are not breastfed. Seriously consider breastfeeding your newborn.

WHEN SHOULD I GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE?

If you have any of these signs, seek emergency medical care right away:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Decreased or no movement of your baby

A high fever that is not responding to acetaminophen (Tylenol ®)



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I GET SICK?

- Pay attention to your health when there is H1N1 flu in your community.
- If you get sick with flu-like symptoms, stay home, limit contact with others, and call your doctor within the first 48 hours of becoming ill. Your doctor will decide if you need testing or treatment. Tests may include a nasal swab, which is best to do within the first 4-5 days of getting sick. Like regular flu, H1N1 flu may make other medical problems worse.
- If you are alone at any time, have someone check on you often if you are feeling ill.
- If you have close contact with someone who has H1N1 flu or is being treated for exposure to H1N1 flu, contact your doctor to discuss whether you need treatment to reduce your chances of getting the flu.



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