

Doctor's Bag



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H1N1 Info for Parents

Very young children and all children with chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, weakened immune systems, kidney disease, heart problems and neurological/neuromuscular disorders may be at risk of complications if they contract H1N1 (swine flu).

How to Protect Your Child Against Flu

Your best course of action is to have your child vaccinated. Then, take everyday steps to help prevent the spread of the illness. (These include many of the tips mentioned in the "DidUKnow" column.) Be sure to teach your child to take preventive steps too. You can keep toys, bedroom, bathroom and kitchen surfaces clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant.

If Your Child Is Sick

Do not allow your sick child to attend school, daycare or camp. If your child is age 5 or older and displays symptoms of flu, consult your doctor and make sure the child gets plenty of rest and fluids. If your child is younger than age 5 or has one of the chronic health conditions listed above, call your doctor as soon as you detect flu-like symptoms. Especially be on the lookout for difficulty breathing, bluish or gray skin color, persistent vomiting and cough and/or fever.

If you have questions or concerns about H1N1, give your family doctor a call.

HLInfo YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO HEALTH CARE AWARENESS

Hand Washing: Your Best Defense

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of colds, flu and other common illnesses.

The following is an excerpt from the CDC 2009 publication, "Clean Hands Save Lives."

When Should You Wash Your Hands?

- Before preparing or eating food
- After going to the bathroom
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has gone to the bathroom
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- After handling uncooked foods, particularly raw meat, poultry or fish
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After handling an animal or animal waste
- After handling garbage
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After handling items contaminated by flood water or sewage



Using Alcohol-Based Sanitizers

- Apply product to the palm of one hand and rub over all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry

Washing with Soap and Water

- Place your hands together under warm water with soap for at least 20 seconds
- Wash hands thoroughly, including wrists, palms, back of hands and under the fingernails
- Dry your hands completely with a clean towel or air dry

REMINDER: HEALTHLINK HAS RELOCATED TO DOWNTOWN ST. LOUIS

All toll-free telephone numbers, including Customer Service and Medical Management, remain the same.

DidUKnow?

H1N1 (Swine Flu) Tips from the CDC

Cover Your Sneezes and Coughs
Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing by infected people. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

Wash Hands Often
See main article.

Stay Home
Stay home from work or school if you get sick. Limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Have a Plan
Have a plan to care for sick family members. Stock up on household, health and emergency supplies such as water, acetaminophen (Tylenol, etc.) and non-perishable food items.

Take Action to Stay Healthy
Avoid close contact (less than 6 feet away) with the sick person as much as possible. Eating utensils should be washed either in a dishwasher or by hand with plenty of soap and hot water. Find healthy ways to deal with stress and anxiety.

Newsletter Information Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Seasonal and Novel H1N1 Flu: A Guide for Parents" August 12, 2009, and "Clean Hands Save Lives!" May 5, 2009, www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/flyers.htm

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "2009 H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)", www.cdc.gov/widgets/h1n1/alt/you.html

WebMD, "Cold Prevention with Hand Washing," December 21, 2007, www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/cold-guide/cold-prevention-hand-washing