

# MAVERICK HEALTH

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO STUDENT HEALTH AT MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

## H1N1 Flu Questions and Answers

### The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Provides Credible Information about Novel H1N1 Flu in Humans

#### What is H1N1?

H1N1 is a new influenza causing illness in people. This new virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. Other countries have reported people sick with this new virus. This virus is spreading from person-to-person, probably in much the same way that regular influenza viruses spread.

#### Why is this new H1N1 virus sometimes called “swine flu”?

This virus was originally referred to as “swine flu” because laboratory testing showed that many of the genes in this new virus were very similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs in North America. But further study has shown that this new virus is different from what normally circulates in North American pigs. It has two genes from flu viruses that normally circulates in pigs in Europe and Asia and avian genes and human genes. Scientists call this a “quadruple reassortant” virus.

#### What are the signs and symptoms of this virus in people?

The symptoms of this new H1N1 flu virus in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Also, like seasonal flu, severe illness and death has occurred as a result of illness associated with this virus.

#### How does this new H1N1 virus spread?

Spread of this H1N1 virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

#### How long can an infected person spread this virus to others?

As the current time, the Centers for Disease Control believes that this virus spreads the same as seasonal flu viruses. With seasonal flu, people may be contagious from one day before they develop symptoms to up to 7 days after they get sick. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods of time.

#### How long can influenza virus remain viable on objects (such as books and doorknobs)?

Studies have shown that influenza can survive on environmental surfaces and can infect a person for up to 2-8 hours after being deposited on the surface.

#### Can I get infected with this new virus from eating or preparing pork?

No. H1N1 viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get this new H1N1 virus from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

#### What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

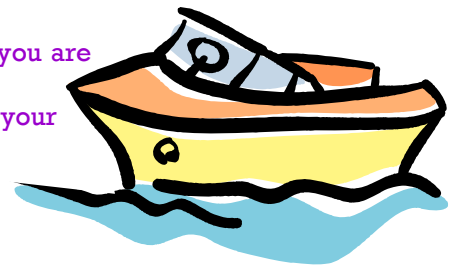
There is no vaccine available right now to protect against this new H1N1 virus. Everyday actions can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after use.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home if you are sick for 7 days after your symptoms begin or until you are symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. This is to keep from infecting others and spreading the virus further.

## Summer Boating Safety

Minnesota has an abundance of water: 11,842 lakes and more than 96,000 miles of rivers and streams. Summer is the perfect time to enjoy this wonderful natural resource. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources offers boating safety tips to keep you safe on the water.

- Accidental falls overboard and capsizing causes the most deaths among boaters. In a small boat, resist the urge to stand up. If you must move around, keep your weight low and close to the center of the craft.
- Wear your personal flotation device (PFD or life jacket). Models are available for all ages and various boating activities. Wearing your PFD is the best “life insurance” policy afloat.
- Inattention, fatigue, or lack of knowledge about local water conditions are common causes for collisions with a second boat or another boat. Stay alert, awake and proceed cautiously on unfamiliar waterways.
- Keep an eye on the weather, especially on larger lakes. Obtain up-to-date weather from a radio or your cell phone. And keep an eye on the sky. Summer storms in Minnesota usually come from the west/southwest. If you are caught in rough weather, put on your PFD, keep low in your boat and head for the closest shore. In heavy waves, your boat handles best when you head **into** the waves at an angle.
- Whitewater canoeing and kayaking are not sports for beginners. Learn whitewater techniques from experts, wear your PDF at all times, and use common sense in shooting rapids.
- Inflatable toys are no substitute for swimming skills. Learn how to swim and know your swimming ability.
- If someone is in trouble in the water, use elementary rescue methods first, such as throwing something that floats to the victim. Only as a last resort should you ever enter the water to save someone. Even then, take a buoyant object like a PFD with you.
- Before you leave on a boating or fishing trip, let someone know where you are going and when you will return.
- If you capsize or fall out of your boat, immediately attempt to re-board your craft. Immersion in cold water (less than 70°) can cause hypothermia.
- Alcohol and drugs are involved in about one third of all boating fatalities. Alcohol use during water recreation requires taking safety precautions: use a sober driver, limit your consumption, and always wear a PFD.



### Lyme Disease in Minnesota

According to a recent news release by the Minnesota Department of Health, approximately one-third of the black-legged ticks (also called deer ticks) collected tested positive for the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Since 2004, an average of about 1,000 cases of Lyme disease have been reported in Minnesota. Black-legged ticks, which are smaller and darker than the common wood tick, are typically active from April through October. Precautions are important:

- Use tick repellent containing DEET or permethrin
- Wear long pants and light colored clothing.
- After returning from the woods, check your body carefully for ticks.

Signs and symptoms of Lyme disease can include expanding rash, fever, headache, chills, muscle pain, joint pain, and fatigue. The rash, one of the earliest symptoms, appears 3 to 30 days after an infectious tick bite. Early diagnosis and treatment is important in preventing severe illness. People who develop signs or symptoms of a tick-related illness after spending time in tick habitat should be seen by a doctor.



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