

GET THE FACTS

2009 Influenza A (H1N1) Virus “Swine Flu”

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FAIRFAX COUNTY RESPONSE: www.fairfaxcounty.gov

Fairfax County has had a pandemic influenza plan in place for several years. In response to the current H1N1 situation, the Health Department has alerted physicians in our community to increase surveillance of flu-like illness; opened a call center to answer questions from the public; reminded the public about how to prevent the spread of germs; communicated frequently with federal, state, and local agencies; facilitated the testing of sick people through our state laboratory; and followed the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) guidance on a wide range of issues to limit the spread of the H1N1 virus.

SCHOOLS: www.fcps.edu

A joint-letter from the Fairfax County Health Department and Fairfax County Public Schools went home to parents advising them of the current situation. Right now, CDC does not recommend closing schools. More information: <http://www.fcps.edu/news/swineflu.htm>

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/HD

The Fairfax County Health Department encourages everyone to take steps to prevent the spread of germs. First, cover your cough and sneezes. Second, wash your hands frequently and properly. Third, stay home from work or school when you are sick. The H1N1 situation is changing rapidly so it is a good idea to stay informed by visiting CDC's website. Also, develop an emergency plan for your family if you haven't already. Learn how: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/pandemicflu/>

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

PANDEMIC ALERT SYSTEM: <http://www.who.int/en/>

There is no cause for alarm following the World Health Organization's recent decision to raise its pandemic alert to Phase 5. This scale primarily indicates how wide-spread the disease is geographically. The system also provides guidance for preparedness, response, and mitigation.

THE VIRUS: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/index.htm>

The 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) virus, originally referred to as "swine flu," is a new influenza virus that was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. CDC has determined that this new H1N1 virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. It is not known at this time how severe this virus will be in the general population. CDC is studying the medical histories of people who have been infected with this virus to determine whether some people may be at greater risk from infection, serious illness or hospitalization from the virus.

HOW PEOPLE GET SICK:

The 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 mouths or noses.

SYMPTOMS OF H1N1: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/sick.htm>

The symptoms of this new H1N1 flu virus in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu. They 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.

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/handwashing/>

Stopping the spread of germs involves three simple, but very effective steps. First, always cover your cough and sneezes with a tissue or the sleeve of your shirt. Second, wash your hands frequently and properly. Third, stay home from work or school when you are sick. It's also important to avoid contact with people who are sick, except when to seek medical care. Call your healthcare provider before going in to allow for appropriate infection control practices to be in place before your arrival.

ANTIVIRAL MEDICATIONS & VACCINE:

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/antiviral.htm>

Currently, there are adequate supplies of antiviral drugs, like Tamiflu®. The drugs are prescribed by a doctor and are available at pharmacies. Antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. There is no vaccine for H1N1 at this time, but scientists are working to develop one.

GET MORE FACTS: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm>

RESOURCES

- Virginia Department of Health info line: **1-877-275-8343**
- Fairfax County Health Department info line: **703-246-2411**
- Learn the proper way to wash hands, posters and fliers (5 languages): <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/flu/swineflu.htm>
- Basic H1N1 Facts - a printable flier for the public:
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/flu/swineflufacts04.pdf> (*English*)
http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/flu/pdf/swineflufacts_esp.pdf (*Spanish*)
- Caring for Yourself and Others Guide - Seasonal and Pandemic Influenza (7 languages): <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/pandemicflu/>

WEB LINKS

- Fairfax County Public Schools: <http://www.fcps.edu/news/swineflu.htm>
- Virginia Department of Health: <http://www.vdh.state.va.us/index.htm>
- CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov>
- U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services: <http://www.hhs.gov/>
- Government pandemic flu info: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>
- Spanish language (Español): www.cdc.gov/spanish