

H1N1 (Swine) Flu Patient Fact Sheet

This fact sheet is specifically for patients who have are suspected of having H1N1 (swine) flu, but were deemed well enough to be discharged home. It will be updated, as required.

Situation summary:

You/your child have been assessed for illness caused by the virus that causes H1N1 (swine) influenza (flu). Your doctor has advised that you can be monitored at home, as long as your symptoms continue to be mild. Your doctor may have decided that you don't need to be tested at this time. If you were tested for swine (H1N1) flu, however, you should be notified of the results **if they are positive** as soon as they become available by the physician who ordered your test.

What is H1N1 (swine) flu:

Swine flu is one of a group of influenza viruses that are transmitted amongst pigs, just as human influenza is spread amongst humans. Usually only humans who are in close contact with pigs get infected by the swine flu, and the virus does not spread from person to person. However, recently a new strain of flu (H1N1) has been identified. Although this was first reported in Mexico, H1N1 is now present in over 100 countries.

You must stay at home until:

- If you do not work in a healthcare setting: you should not work/go to school and should avoid public gatherings until your fever is gone and you are feeling well. (Persistent cough alone, without other symptoms, is not a reason to stay home).
- **If you work in a healthcare setting:** you must not return to work for at least 7 days after the onset of symptoms. You may return to work after this time provided your fever is gone and you are feeling well. (Persistent cough alone, without other symptoms, is not a reason to stay home).

While at home, you should take steps to limit the spread of influenza:

1. If possible, minimize close contact with family and do not share items such as cups, utensils or toys that have not been thoroughly cleaned.
2. Use cough etiquette at all times:
 - Cover the nose/mouth when coughing and sneezing
 - Use tissues to contain secretions and throw the tissues into a garbage immediately after use.
 - Encourage coughing into elbow if tissues are not immediately available
3. Clean your hands (using an alcohol hand rub or soap and water) for 15 seconds after sneezing, coughing, or any contact with respiratory secretions from yourself or others, including children. Hands should also be cleaned before and after eating.
4. Clean the areas that you/your child use (including counters, bathrooms and personal care items) with routine household cleaning products, daily.

You should return to the emergency room if you develop any of the following symptoms:

- Worsening fever or a new fever;
- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing or a worsening cough;
- Severe body aches or other symptoms that are worsening; or
- Other concerning symptoms such as a rash, headaches etc.

Prepared by the Hospitals Branch, City of Ottawa Clinical Care Command Centre