

FLU FACTS: H1N1 INFLUENZA (Swine Flu)

WHAT IS INFLUENZA A H1N1 (Swine Flu)

- H1N1 Flu is a new strain of influenza. Studies have shown there is little immunity in the general population
- H1N1 Flu is circulating in the Mason County community. We have had many confirmed cases reported. Influenza activity have decreased in the last two (2) weeks of July.
- The Department continues to receive reports of cases and as is true with the rest of the country most cases are in individuals less than 50 years old.
- The primary symptoms are a fever of greater than 100°F, body aches, cough, and sore throat. Some individuals report breathing difficulties, diarrhea and vomiting.
- We expect cases of H1N1 flu to decrease over the summer but it will likely increase again in the fall.
- Most individuals experience mild to moderate illness. We have had individuals with critical illness. Most individuals who have become ill have recovered without requiring medical treatment.
- Like seasonal flu this flu may cause deaths. Folks with chronic illness, immune problems and young children are a high risk for complications due to the flu. We have one death reported in Mason County.

WHAT SHOULD INDIVIDUALS DO TO PREVENT ILLNESS

- Wash hand with warm water and soap- if soap and water are not available, use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay away from people who are sick.
- Avoid large crowds.
- Use good food handling practices. Do not share snacks, food, drinks, or cigarettes with others.

WHAT SHOULD INDIVIDUALS DO IF THEY BECOME ILL?

- Individuals should stay home from work, childcare, school or public gatherings when sick with a fever and cough. Individuals with H1N1 flu should stay home for at least seven (7) days after start of symptoms. If they are still sick after 7 days they should remain home until they have been fever-free for 24 hours.
- Drink a lot of fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Cough into your sleeve or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough and sneeze. Dispose of tissues in a covered container and wash your hands.
- Most people with influenza do not need to see a doctor. Call your health care provider if you or a family member are sick enough to need medical care.
- Anyone having difficulty catching their breath should seek medical care as soon as possible.
- Avoid having sick family members taking care of infants and other folks at high risk for complications (i.e. immune-compromised) of influenza.

PREPARE YOURSELF AND FAMILY FOR THE FLU SEASON NOW

Get a seasonal flu shot when they are available. If you do not normally get a flu shot, please consider getting one this year. We have been advised that H1N1 vaccine may be available sometime this fall we do not yet know who the target groups are for the vaccine.

Think about what you may need at home while you or family members are sick with the flu:

- Patience, and lots of it
- Tissues AND remember to properly dispose of used tissues in a covered container
- Thermometer
- Fever relievers like acetaminophen, ibuprofen—do not use aspirin
- Cleaning supplies, sanitizing cloths and bleach
- Soap and alcohol based hand sanitizers
- Extra supply of prescription drugs and medical supplies
- Water or fluids with electrolytes (like sports drinks)
- Someone to give you TLC. ☺

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>