

IMPORTANT FLU INFORMATION

Did You Know...?

- There is a difference between the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu.
- The seasonal flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza (flu) viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the seasonal flu is by getting a seasonal flu vaccination each year.
- H1N1 flu (sometimes referred to as “swine flu”) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This virus is spreading from person-to-person, probably in much the same way that seasonal influenza viruses spread.
- The signs and symptoms of the seasonal flu are much the same as the H1N1 flu. They include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue.
- As many as 36,000 people die each year from what is commonly known as the seasonal flu, and more than 200,000 people are hospitalized.
- There likely will be two different flu vaccines this year — one for the seasonal flu and one planned for the H1N1 flu.
- The seasonal flu vaccine will not protect people from the H1N1 flu, nor will the H1N1 flu vaccine protect people from the seasonal flu.
- Initial availability of the H1N1 flu vaccine is likely to be limited. High-risk groups will be identified and will receive priority.
- Local Public Health officials have been working with area hospitals, clinics, school districts, emergency managers, and other local, state and federal officials to develop plans to deal with both the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu.
- The best way to fight off the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu is to get the two separate vaccinations.
- Watch for additional information from your provider, local public health, the Minnesota Department of Health and the news media.

Protecting Yourself and Your Family

- In addition to the flu vaccines, there are other ways to prevent getting or spreading the flu:
 - Wash your hands thoroughly and often with warm water and soap. Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is also effective.
 - Cover your cough, preferably by coughing into your sleeve.
 - If you are sick, stay home from work, school, the mall, etc.
 - If your child is sick, keep them home from school and daycare.
- Develop a family plan in case you or your family members come down with the flu. This plan should include:

- Contact information (phone numbers, e-mail addresses) for adults in the household or others who may be asked to care for sick children.
- Contact information for your health care provider.
- Contact information for your local hospital emergency department or urgent care center.
- Contact information for your child’s school or daycare provider.
- Plans with your employer(s) in case you need to stay home to care for a sick child. Keep in mind illness from the flu could extend over several days or longer.
- Have a supply of hand sanitizer, facial tissue, pain medication/fever reducer and cough medicine on hand in the event someone in your household becomes ill.
- Practice good health habits, including getting plenty of sleep, being physically active, managing your stress, drinking plenty of fluids and eating nutritious food.

This information is being provided by the South Central Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Program as a public service in cooperation with local public health departments, hospitals, clinics, school districts, long term care facilities, emergency managers and other local, county, state and federal officials.