

# H1N1 FLU UPDATE

## SOMERVILLE-RARITAN-MANVILLE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

### H1N1 FLU OR SEASONAL FLU ... WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

- **H1N1 "SWINE" FLU** is a new (novel) influenza virus that the immune system does not quickly recognize as an invader. Since it is a totally different virus from seasonal flu viruses, manufacturers must make an entirely new vaccine for H1N1 flu. And since it is a new vaccine, people may need **two shots** a few weeks apart for it to be effective.

The symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to seasonal flu - fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, headache, and fatigue. However, older adults **do not** yet appear to be at increased risk of novel H1N1-related complications. In fact, school-age children seem to be at highest risk of getting the H1N1 flu.

Spread of H1N1 flu virus happens in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing. People may also become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes.

- **SEASONAL FLU** re-appears every year, with outbreaks at their worst in the fall and winter months. These flu viruses have been infecting people for many years, so the immune system is familiar with these invaders and is usually able to quickly recognize and fight them off. Still, 36,000 Americans die from seasonal flu every year, mostly those at "high risk"—adults 65 years and older, children younger than five years old, pregnant women, and people with certain chronic medical conditions at any age.

Because viruses are always changing, a new seasonal flu vaccine is created for each flu season. Each new, updated seasonal flu vaccine protects people from the latest versions of the common flu viruses. However, since the vaccine is similar to past years people need only **one seasonal flu shot** each year.



### FLU SHOT NEWS

*All vaccines help your immune system identify - and destroy - a disease's presence before it has a chance to cause illness.*

The H1N1 flu vaccine will be **different** from the seasonal flu vaccine. To be protected from both viruses you may need three vaccinations (one seasonal flu shot + two H1N1 flu shots).

A vaccine to protect you from H1N1 flu will be available this fall. It may require two doses - a second dose given 3-4 weeks after the first dose.

It is important to be protected from **BOTH** H1N1 flu and seasonal flu. The Health Department will keep you informed when vaccine availability is confirmed.

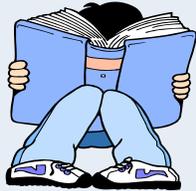
We do expect there will be enough vaccine for everyone who wants to be vaccinated. However, if the vaccine is initially available in limited quantities the **FIRST** priority groups will be: pregnant women, people who live with or care for children younger than age 6 months, children ages 6 months - 4 years, and children ages 5 -18 years who have chronic medical conditions, and health care and emergency medical services personnel with direct patient contact.

### FLU FACTS

- Flu viruses tend to live longer on surfaces than cold viruses do. A flu virus can live on a hard surface for up to **2 days**.
- A person can be infected with the flu virus, look and feel healthy ... and spread the flu for **24 hours before** they feel sick.
- Antibiotics are only effective in treating bacterial infections (like bronchitis or pneumonia) and have **NO** effect on the flu. Only anti-viral drugs may shorten the duration and intensity of flu symptoms.

# HOME CARE TIPS

- Check with your health care provider about any special care you might need if you are pregnant, immunosuppressed, or have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema.
- Antiviral medications can sometimes help lessen influenza symptoms, but require a prescription. Check with your health care provider about whether you should take an antiviral medication.
- **If you are sick stay home for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines.** Avoid close contact with others as much as possible, even at home.
- Identify a single household member as the “care giver” of anyone who is sick to minimize their interaction with others. The main care giver should be the only person going in and out of the sick person’s room or area. Other household members should have no contact, or very limited contact, with the sick person.



## ADDITIONAL HOME CARE RESOURCES

- **Pandemic Influenza Home Care Guide**  
Somerville Health Department  
(request an electronic copy at [mtyson@somervillenj.org](mailto:mtyson@somervillenj.org))
- **The American Medical Association Family Medical Guide - Fourth Edition**  
(AMA, © 2009)  
  
**The Johns Hopkins Complete Home Guide to Symptoms and Remedies**  
(Authors of the John Hopkins Medical Letter and Simeon Margolis, © 2004)
- **Mayo Clinic Family Health Book - Third Edition** (Mayo Clinic, © 2003)

- Stay in bed and get plenty of rest.
- Keep the **sick person** isolated (separated) from people who are not sick. Sanitize any shared surfaces, including doorknobs, railings, sink knobs, toilet handles, and counter tops with a disinfectant or a bleach-water solution.
- Dehydration is a common flu symptom and happens when the body loses too much water and the water is not replaced quickly enough. Prevent dehydration by drinking plenty of clear fluids (water, broth, tea, sports drinks or electrolyte beverages) even if you do not feel thirsty.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough and sneeze into the crook of your arm (or sleeve), not into your hands.
- Clean your hands with soap and water or a hand sanitizer often and especially after using tissues, or after coughing or sneezing into your hands.

***All people with H1N1 flu or a flu-like illness who are not hospitalized should stay at home to prevent the spread of illness to other people.***

- ***Do not rush to the hospital or doctor’s office for basic care ...*** but be watchful for emergency warning signs (see below) that might mean you need to seek medical attention.

### Get medical care right away if the sick person:

- Has difficulty breathing, chest pain, or is wheezing
- Has a fever that: doesn’t respond to fever medicine within 6 hours; lasts more than 3 days and the person has difficulty breathing; or the fever goes away for one or two days and then comes back
- Has purple or blue discoloration of the lips
- Is vomiting and unable to keep liquids down
- Has signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination, or a lack of tears in crying infants
- Has seizures (uncontrolled convulsions), is less responsive than normal, or becomes confused

# HOW CAN I GET FLU READY?

## PREPARE ... your home!

- Check the Emergency Planning Shopping List on the back page to see what you need if you or family members get sick and need to stay home for a week or so.

Designate a “sick room” (and bathroom, if possible) to isolate the ill person from the rest of the family, and to prevent them from further contaminating the rest of your home.

## PROTECT ... yourself against germs!

- Wash hands *frequently* with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Remember ... flu viruses can stay alive outside the body for hours.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth ... germs often spread hand-to-face.
- Practice “social distancing”. Stay 4-6 feet away from people who are sick, coughing, or sneezing. If you can't move away, turn your head away from a person who coughs or sneezes.



## PREVENT ... the spread of germs!

- Cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm (or sleeve) not into your hands. If you cough or sneeze into a tissue cover both your nose and mouth. Throw away the tissue and wash your hands.
- When you are sick, stay home... from work, school, or errands. **DO NOT** immediately return to work or school - while you may feel better, your body is still weak and more vulnerable to secondary infections.
- Clean common surfaces that are frequently touched.

## PROMOTE ... a strong immune system!

- **EAT FOODS** rich in “antioxidants” like vitamins C and E, carotenoids, and omega-3 fatty acids that boost the immune system’s fighting power. Choose deeply colored produce like peppers, broccoli, carrots, leafy green veggies, tomatoes or citrus fruits; nuts & seeds; fatty fish like salmon or tuna.
- **STAY HYDRATED...** it helps flush toxins from the body, keeps the mucus membranes in the nose and respiratory system moist and more resistant to germs, and helps thin excess mucus if you do get sick.
- **EXERCISE.** Regular, moderate exercise, like brisk walking, can boost the immune system’s antibody and T cell response. Get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days of the week.
- **GET ENOUGH REST.** Chronic lack of sleep affects your whole body, including the immune system. Children need 9-11 hours, adolescents need about 9 hours, and adults need 7-9 hours of sleep a night.
- **CONTROL STRESS.** Stress decreases your immune system’s ability to identify and destroy invading organisms. Try these strategies to control stress: set limits and priorities; ask for help; take 15 minutes for yourself; create a support system of friends, family, or coworkers.

### STAY INFORMED!

- Somerville Health Department  
[www.somervillenj.org](http://www.somervillenj.org)  
(908) 725-2300
- New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services  
[www.state.nj.us/health/](http://www.state.nj.us/health/)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
[www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/)  
(800) 232-4636

# EMERGENCY PLANNING SHOPPING LIST

Prepare your home for emergencies in advance of any real threat. Reduce stress by buying your purchases over several weeks to avoid long lines and empty shelves during an emergency.

## FOOD

- Bottled water
- Ready-to-eat canned soup
- Dry cereal, soup and crackers
- Canned or powdered milk, cans of juice, tea and powdered drinks
- Canned fruit, vegetables, fish and meat
- Comfort foods (macaroni & cheese, peanut butter & jelly)

## HEALTH & FIRST AID

- Disposable masks (facemasks and respirators)
- Latex (or vinyl) gloves
- Thermometers
- Hand sanitizers and disinfectant sprays
- Deodorant, toothpaste, soap, shampoo
- Antibiotic and cortisone creams/ointments
- First Aid Kit and a general health care book

## COMMON TOOLS & SMART SUPPLIES

- Crank and battery operated flashlights, cell phone chargers, radio and lanterns
- Masking, duct and packing tapes
- Utility knife, extra blades
- Screwdrivers, scissors, pliers, hammer, shovel
- Safety goggles, work gloves
- Fire extinguisher(s)
- Mini-hand & foot warmers (like hikers and skiers use)
- Cooler(s) - keep extra ice in the freezer

## MEDICATIONS

- Extra supply of prescription medications and a copy of your prescriptions
- Aspirin, ibuprofen or acetaminophen
- Anti-diarrhea/anti-vomiting medicines, rehydration fluids
- Cough syrup, decongestant, an antihistamine.

## CLEANING SUPPLIES

### PAPER GOODS

- Disposable utensils, cups, plates, napkins
- Multi-packs of paper towels, toilet paper and tissues
- Liquid dish soap, detergent & bleach (1/4 cup of bleach in one gallon of water is an all-purpose disinfectant)
- Ziplock storage bags, plastic wrap and foil, garbage bags

## SPECIAL ITEMS

- Foods or medical supplies for family members with special needs
- Baby food, formula, diapers
- Pet food, leash, vaccination papers, carrier
- Extra batteries (various sizes)
- Spare glasses, contact lenses, solution, extra hearing aid batteries
- Extra money (3 months of expenses if possible)



## FACEMASK OR RESPIRATOR?

A **facemask** (“surgical mask”) is a loose-fitting, disposable mask that covers the nose and mouth of a sick person. It helps keep their relatively large, infected droplets from spreading to others. A sick person might use a facemask when a care giver enters their “sick” room, or if they need to go out to see a health care provider.

While we’ve seen news stories of whole cities wearing face-masks, it’s not an effective strategy. Wearing a facemask when you’re healthy may give you a sense of security, but it will not protect you from breathing in very small particles, like a flu virus.

A **respirator** is worn by a healthy person to protect them from breathing in very small particles (like a flu virus). An “N-95” respirator will filter out 95% of all airborne particles. A healthy person might use a respirator when taking care of a person sick with the flu.

## SOMERVILLE RARITAN MANVILLE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

25 West End Avenue  
Somerville, NJ 08876



Public Health  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

(908) 725-2300  
Hours 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

**Steven Krajewski**  
Health Officer