

## Emergency Preparedness Pointers

### NOVEL H1N1 FLU

By now, you have most likely heard about the Novel H1N1 flu virus, formerly known as the swine flu virus. Cases of this new flu virus were first detected in people in the U.S. last spring and have continued to spread worldwide. Throughout the summer, cases have also continued to appear in Ada County and Idaho. As of the end of August, there have been 281 cases of the flu around the state. As we get closer to the traditional flu season, we are now dealing with both the H1N1 flu virus and the seasonal flu virus.

A new flu virus means that most people will not have any immunity against the virus. The best way to protect yourself against the H1N1 flu or any other kind of flu is the flu vaccine. Researchers are currently in the process of making vaccine for the H1N1 virus. It should be available later this fall, but until you can get a vaccine, there are things you can do to prevent getting sick. Most people who have become sick with the H1N1 flu virus have had typical flu-like symptoms and have made a full recovery.

#### Flu Prevention

**A flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself from getting the flu.**

But until a vaccine is available for the H1N1 virus, there are easy ways to prevent becoming sick from H1N1 flu and the seasonal flu.

- ◆ Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. You need to wash your hands for 15-20 seconds. If you don't have soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Rub your hands until the gel is dry.
- ◆ Cough or sneeze into your elbow rather than using your hands. If you use a tissue, throw it away and don't reuse tissues.
- ◆ Try to avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth so you don't spread germs.
- ◆ Stay away from people who might be sick.
- ◆ If you are already sick, stay home from work or school (unless you need to visit your health care provider).

The CDC recommends that everyone **Take 3** to protect yourself and your family from the flu.

#### ***Take 3***

1. **Take time to get vaccinated.**
2. **Take everyday preventive actions.**
3. **Take flu antiviral drugs, if recommended.**

#### Flu Symptoms

**The symptoms of the H1N1 flu virus are similar to the regular seasonal flu.**

Symptoms include:

- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Body aches
- ◆ Headaches
- ◆ Feeling tired
- ◆ Coughing
- ◆ Runny nose
- ◆ Sore throat

Some people have also experienced vomiting and diarrhea.

#### ***Get Ready to Get Vaccinated!***

When the H1N1 flu vaccine becomes available later this fall, everyone might not be able to get the vaccine right away. This is because it is not possible to make that much vaccine at one time. When more vaccine becomes available, everyone will be able to receive a vaccine. Until then, priority groups have been identified as those who will be first to receive the H1N1 flu vaccine. People in these groups may be at risk for having a more severe case of flu if they get sick or they may be in places where flu might easily spread, such as schools. The groups are:

- ◆ Pregnant women
- ◆ Children and young adults aged 6 months to 24 years
- ◆ Household contacts of children younger than 6 months of age
- ◆ Adults aged 25 to 64 years with chronic health conditions
- ◆ Healthcare workers and emergency medical services personnel

#### For more information:

- ◆ Central District Health Department: [cdhd.idaho.gov](http://cdhd.idaho.gov)
- ◆ Central District Health Department H1N1 Flu Hotline: (208) 321-2222
- ◆ Idaho Department of Health and Welfare: [www.panfluidaho.gov](http://www.panfluidaho.gov)
- ◆ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- ◆ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)

