



H1N1 Fact Sheet *from the* **Department of Health & Human Services**

August 3, 2009

- **Novel influenza A (H1N1) virus is still with us.**

While the headlines and the television chatter about this virus may have quieted down, H1N1 has not gone away.

There are still higher levels of influenza-like illness than is normal for this time of year, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It is very unusual this time of year to have reports of flu activity.

H1N1 can be dangerous for a person with an underlying medical condition—such as asthma or diabetes—or if you're pregnant. So far, it's been most contagious among children and young adults age six months to 24 years old. Health care workers, emergency responders, and people caring for infants should be on guard.

If you work, start planning for arrangements for child care in case your child gets sick or talk with your employer about what to do in case you need to be at home with a sick family member.

If you're an employer, now is the time to plan to meet your objectives with a reduced staff. You do not want an employee who is ill to spread flu in the workplace.

Though we will not know the impact of H1N1 in advance, scientists believe the virus could worsen when schools start to open. In addition, unlike years past, it's possible we might be dealing with both this new H1N1 and the seasonal flu.

- **Preparation for the flu has already begun.**

The federal government is actively engaged in combating the spread of H1N1. Scientists at the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Food and Drug Administration are working on an H1N1 vaccine and expect to have it ready to distribute by mid-October.

Federal scientists are also working with vaccine manufacturers to make sure that the vaccine is safe, and that the flu has not changed in ways that would make the new vaccine ineffective.

The Department of Health and Human Services is distributing funds to states, tribes and territories, to support a new vaccination campaign and help hospitals prepare for a surge of patients if an outbreak hits their community.

- **Everyone can take some very basic actions to help stop the spread of flu.**

Wash your hands with soap and water. Cough into your elbow or sleeve or into a tissue, not your hands. Stay home if you're sick. Get a seasonal flu shot.

- **There are resources available to help you learn how to prevent the flu.**

Go to www.flu.gov. You'll find information on flu.gov to prepare for, prevent, and respond to an outbreak. It includes checklists and fact sheets that families and communities can use to ensure they are prepared.

Get an H1N1 flu kit, available from the CDC. These are user-friendly, practical information, tools and templates designed to help childcare centers, pre-kindergarten - 12 schools, and colleges and universities prepare and respond to H1N1 flu.

- **We are all in this together.**

No one has the luxury of being complacent. H1N1 is a serious virus capable of causing severe disease and death. Everyone has a role in preventing the spread of flu.

There *is* a silver lining: the attention we're paying to the H1N1 virus is accelerating our work to improve the entire public health system. By working together, we will not only fight the 2009 H1N1 virus, we'll lay the groundwork for protecting the American people's health for years to come.