

H1N1 (Swine Flu) Influenza Facts For Inpatients

What is H1N1 influenza?

H1N1 Influenza also known as the Swine flu is a respiratory illness that is contagious. It is caused by the H1N1 virus that normally infects pigs (swine). The virus now spreads to humans and is easily passed from person to person. The illness can be mild to severe. Signs and symptoms: Fever ($\geq 100^{\circ}$ F) and one of the following: Cough, sore throat, nasal congestion, and runny nose. Additional symptoms: Diarrhea, vomiting, body and muscle aches, headache, chills, fatigue, and shortness of breath.

How doctors and hospital staff help to prevent the spread of Flu Like Illness (Possible H1N1 Influenza)

- Everyone should cover their nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing and carefully dispose of the tissue in the trash.
- Provide masks to patients who have respiratory symptoms such as cough.
- Perform hand hygiene by washing hands with soap and water or using the waterless alcohol hand rub before and after touching all patients. Perform hand hygiene after touching anything in the patient's room such as bed and medical supplies.
- Clean patient rooms and supplies on a regular basis with disinfectants to prevent germs from getting on people's hands.
- Use droplet precautions which include wearing a mask and gloves when entering patient's room (gown when in close contact with patients that are coughing).
- Continue precautions for 7 days after symptoms begin or until 24 hours after symptom free, whichever is longer.

How patients, families and visitors can help

In the hospital:

- Ask for a mask to wear when you enter the hospital and you have flu like illness.
- Check with the nurse about the special precautions to take.
- Perform hand hygiene, wear gloves and a mask when entering the patient's room. Remember to remove the gloves and masks and perform hand hygiene when leaving the patient's room.
- Make sure the patient is wearing a mask (if able to tolerate) when transported out of the room to other areas in the hospital.
- Take a look to make sure that the hospital staff is performing hand hygiene before and after caring for the patient. Please remind healthcare workers.
- Take a look to make sure that the hospital staff is wearing gloves and a mask when caring for the patient and/or touching the environment. Please remind healthcare workers.

At home:

- Talk to your doctor or nurse about special precautions to take at home.
- Perform hand hygiene after coughing or sneezing.
- Cover your mouth when you cough and your nose when you sneeze. Throw away the tissue in the trash.

Please talk with the doctor or nurse to discuss any of your concerns or questions. For specific questions, please call the Infection Prevention Department at (703) 558-6400.