

H1N1 NOVEL (Swine) FLU INFECTION CONTROL MEASURES & INFORMATION (2009)

Infection control measures are actions that can help prevent the spread of a respiratory disease/virus in the workplace. These measures include:

- **Stay home if you are ill.** Before going to your doctor call to determine what course of action they recommend. You may utilize the United Health Care Nurseline (1-877-360-4500).

Under current flu conditions, employees with flu-like symptoms should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). The sick person may decide to stop taking fever-reducing medicines as he or she begins to feel better. This person should continue to monitor his or her temperature until it has been normal for 24 hours.

If flu conditions become more severe, the sick employee should stay home for 7 days. A person who is still sick after 7 days should stay home until 24 hours after their symptoms have gone away. Sick people should stay at home, except if they need to get medical care, and they should avoid contact with others. Keeping people with a fever at home may reduce the number of people who get infected with the flu virus.

Warning Signs in Children

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Warning Signs in Adults

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
 - Sudden dizziness
 - Confusion
 - Severe or persistent vomiting
 - Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- **Should household members of sick people stay home, too?** No, an employee with an ill household member may go to work. It is especially important that these employees monitor themselves for illness.
 - **Wash your hands.** Hand washing is the most important preventive measure to prevent disease transmission. All organizations should promote hand washing and ensure that adequate supplies of hand soap and paper towels are available. Post signs in conspicuous locations (washrooms, staff kitchen, coffee stations, etc.) to remind staff to wash their hands. People must not share towels, eating utensils, or drinks with anyone else. *NOTE: When washing hands in public restrooms carry the paper towel out and use it to open the restroom door, then dispose of.*

- **Use hand sanitizers.** Hand sanitizers should be used when hand washing stations are not available. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with 60% to 90% alcohol (isopropanol or ethanol). The higher the alcohol content the better. The County will be placing hand sanitizers in common work areas.
- **Practice respiratory etiquette.** Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes, and dispose of single-use tissues after use, then wash your hands. If a tissue is not available cough or sneeze into your elbow. These practices are essential to preventing the spread of viruses or infectious diseases.
- **Utilize sanitation supplies** so employees can clean frequently touched surfaces such as phones and computers, and be able to appropriately cleanse hands.
- **Encourage employees to practice social distancing**
 - Avoid face-to-face meetings if possible. Meet using teleconferencing, video conferencing, e-mails, or faxes instead, or some combination thereof
 - Cancel non-essential business travel
 - Minimize contact with others by keeping one's office door closed; using stairs instead of crowded elevators
 - Increase your interpersonal space; staying three feet (one meter) away from others when a verbal communication is necessary
 - Avoiding shaking hands, hugging, or kissing people
 - Bringing lunch and eating at one's desk or away from others;
- **Can the flu virus live on surfaces, such as computer keyboards?** Yes, the virus can live on hard objects up to 8 hours. Flu viruses may be spread when a person touches a hard surface (such as a desk or doorknob) or an object (such as a keyboard or pen) where the virus has landed and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

IMPORTANT: The H1N1 virus is transmitted via droplets (wet particles) from sneezing, coughing, runny nose. If you touch something WET - WASH YOUR HANDS and clean the surface that was wet with standard disinfectant. It is the WET particles that can live up to 8 hours on hard surfaces. If it's WET don't touch it, clean it!

- **Cleaning workplaces.** Routinely clean surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas. Additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is not recommended.
- **Vaccinations and Medications:** All employees are encouraged to get the regular seasonal flu vaccine. Employees who are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications are encouraged to get the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available. People at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes). County health insurance covers 100% of the cost of flu vaccinations at in-network medical providers. The network includes the Walgreen and CVS in-store clinics.

Prescriptions for Tamiflu, and other symptomatic treatment, are covered under the County's pharmacy plan subject to co-payments.

With information regarding vaccinations being rapidly developed, up-to-date information regarding vaccinations will be posted on the County website for employees.....see below "Useful Websites".

- **Pregnant women.** Pregnant women should follow the same guidance as the general public about staying home when sick, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and routine cleaning. Pregnant women are at higher risk of complications from flu and, like all people at higher risk, should speak with their health care provider as soon as possible if they develop flu-like symptoms. Early treatment with antiviral flu medicines is recommended for pregnant women who have the flu; these medicines are most effective when started within the first 48 hours of feeling sick.

Pregnant women are part of the first priority group to receive the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available. Seasonal flu vaccine is also recommended for pregnant women and can be given at any time during pregnancy.

- **Employee Information and Updates**

- ▲ Pinellas County Employee H1N1 Information and other useful links:
http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/special_advisory.htm#employees
- ▲ Planning & Care of Sick: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/individual/index.html>
- ▲ United Health Care information site:
http://www.uhc.com/news_room/swine_flu_advisory/swine_flu_faq.htm
- ▲ United Health Care Nurse Line (24/7): 1-877-360-4500; on-line nurse chat is also available by logging into www.myUHC.com.
- ▲ Employees Assistance Program: Counselors are available by phone 24/7 to assist members with emotional stressors they may be experiencing and provide up to date resources on the Swine Flu and appropriate referrals. 1-800-272-3626