

## Swine Flu Update

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the H1N1 virus (swine flu) to be a Phase 6 pandemic. The declaration of a pandemic does not suggest that there's been any change in the behavior of the virus; only that it is spreading in more parts of the world.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates the H1N1 virus will infect 40% of the U.S. population over the next two flu seasons – and that several hundred thousand could die worldwide if they are not properly vaccinated. At this point, this particular strain of flu is not as severe as the 1918 pandemic, according to CDC representatives.

Although the H1N1 vaccine is expected to be available in the fall, Anne Schuchat, director for the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, warned at a recent press conference that “we have to be ready for the idea that we may not get a vaccine as soon as we'd like it, or (one) that works as well as we would like it to. We might not even get a vaccine. That's why it's so important for individuals, communities, and governments to prepare.”

Remember the personal steps you can take to reduce the spread of infection and to keep yourself, your coworkers, and your family healthy and safe: Cover your cough or sneeze, stay home if you're ill, and keep your children home from school if they are ill. Develop a personal, family, and business plan for a worst-case scenario for a flu outbreak in your community.

Contact your doctor to see if you should be treated for influenza with antiviral medication if:

- You have a fever over 100° F, accompanied by a cough or sore throat, AND
- You have an underlying condition (e.g., asthma, diabetes) OR you are pregnant, OR the person who is sick is younger than age 2.



**“We may not get a vaccine as soon as we'd like it ... We might not even get a vaccine.”**

*Anne Schuchat  
Director, National Center for  
Immunization & Respiratory  
Disease*

### Who Should Get the H1N1 Vaccine?

When a vaccine becomes available for the H1N1 virus, the CDC recommends the following groups be immunized first:

- ✓ **Pregnant women**, who have a 4-fold increased risk of hospitalization if infected with the H1N1 virus
- ✓ **People who live with or care for children** younger than 6 months of age. (Children under 6 months are not able to be vaccinated directly. Therefore, the public health strategy is to vaccinate those around them to keep from spreading the virus to them.)

- ✓ **Healthcare and emergency services personnel**

- ✓ **People ages 6 months to 24 years old** (The virus seems to spread fastest among this age group.)
- ✓ **People ages 25-64 years old who are at higher risk** for H1N1 because of chronic health disorders (e.g., asthma) or compromised immune systems

Once these priority groups are vaccinated, the committee recommends vaccinating healthy people who are 24-64 years old. The H1N1 outbreak has, to a large extent, not affected people over age 65, leading the committee to designate this group as having the least risk. However, people in this age group are at high risk for complications from seasonal influenza. That's why it is very important for them to get their seasonal flu shot. Please note that the 2009-2010 seasonal flu vaccine will not protect against the swine flu.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2009.*

Prepare for an influenza pandemic now, before flu season sets in. Here are guidelines from the CDC: [www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/individual/index.html](http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/individual/index.html)



## Are You Too Connected?

Cell phones can keep you connected to friends, family, coworkers, and business contacts. And they certainly come in handy if your car breaks down. But inconsiderate cell phone use can cause problems in relationships and the work environment. Click here for a little common-sense cell phone etiquette. [www.wellspring.info/wn/cellphone.pdf](http://www.wellspring.info/wn/cellphone.pdf)

## Surviving Cancer

Cancer is responsible for 1 in every 4 deaths each year in the United States. If current trends continue, one-third of Americans will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime. But improvements in screening practices, cancer treatment and care, and early detection are allowing more people to live “beyond” cancer each year.

An estimated 11.1 million Americans are living with a previous diagnosis of cancer. They have a greater risk for recurrence or developing second cancers due to the effects of treatment, unhealthy lifestyle behaviors, underlying genetics, or risk factors that contributed to the first cancer.

The following factors can help you or someone you love maintain health and improve survival and quality of life:

- **Be physically active.** Moderate exercise improves fatigue, reduces anxiety, and builds self-esteem. It also improves your physical health.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight raises the risk for recurrence and reduces the odds for survival.



The American Cancer Society offers more cancer survivor tips: [www.cancer.org/docroot/mh/mh\\_0.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/mh/mh_0.asp)

- **Avoid all tobacco use** or exposure to secondhand smoke.
- **Eat a variety of foods** that will give you the nutrients you need. Emphasize fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-calorie foods. Limit red and processed meats, animal fats (including butter and cream), and rich desserts.
- **Get regular follow-up care** – for emotional health too.

A poll conducted by the Lance Armstrong Foundation found that nearly half of cancer survivors felt a lack of support or resources in the areas of dealing with emotions, and financial and work issues. The poll also showed that 70% of respondents experienced depression because of their cancer. Yet more than 75% of the respondents did not seek out help from a counselor, social worker, or psychologist. Nurture emotional health by developing supportive relationships.

If needed, get help from a counselor to assist you in dealing with emotional trauma and conflicts.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2009.  
Lance Armstrong Foundation. 2009.*



## Do You Have Chronic Fatigue Syndrome?

Between 1 and 4 million Americans suffer from *chronic fatigue syndrome* (CFS) – profound fatigue that is not improved

by bed rest and that may be worsened by physical or mental activity. CFS includes 9 common symptoms:

- Fatigue
- Muscle pain
- Pain in multiple joints
- Sore throat
- Substantial impairment in memory or concentration
- Non-refreshing sleep
- Headaches of a new type, pattern, or severity

- Tender lymph nodes in the neck or armpit
- Relapse of symptoms after physical or mental exertion

About 40% of Americans who report symptoms of CFS have a serious, treatable, previously unrecognized medical or psychiatric condition, such as diabetes, thyroid disease, or depression.

See your doctor if you have extreme fatigue that has lasted at least 6 months, is not substantially relieved by rest, and causes a significant reduction in daily activities. Early diagnosis and management can substantially improve the probability of recovery.

No single therapy helps all CFS patients. But many have been helped by lifestyle changes, including prevention of overexertion, reduced stress, dietary modifications,

gentle stretching, and nutritional supplementation. Drug therapies can treat sleep, pain, and other specific CFS symptoms.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2009.*

### ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

**Q:** How much exercise do I need to stay healthy?

**A:** Go to [www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-howmuchexercise.pdf](http://www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-howmuchexercise.pdf) to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: [well@wellsource.com](mailto:well@wellsource.com), subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

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