

What is H1N1 Flu?

H1N1 Flu is a new type of influenza virus detected by CDC in April 2009. The symptoms are similar to seasonal flu—fever, cough, sore throat, headache, fatigue, and body aches. Vomiting and diarrhea may also occur.

Transmission is thought to be spread through the cough or sneeze of an infected person, or by touching a contaminated surface and then touching your mouth or nose.

If you or your child is sick, call your physician!

Tips to Stay Healthy

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleansers are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.



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Content adapted from National Association of
School Psychologists, May 1, 2009

Talking to Children About H1N1 Flu

A Guide for Parents



**Cape May County
Department of Health**

www.cmchealth.net

Addressing Children's Concerns

H1N1 Flu fears can make families anxious. Children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. If parents seem overly worried, children may panic.

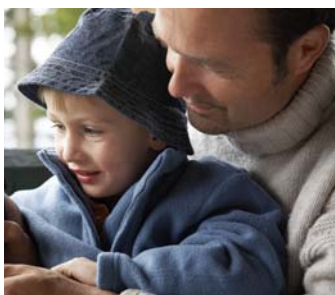
Reassure your children that health and school officials are working hard to ensure that people throughout the country stay healthy.

Parents should:

- Ensure that all information is factual and age appropriate.
- Teach children positive preventive measures.
- Talk with children about their fears, and give them a sense of some control.

You know your children best!

- Let your children's questions guide you when providing information.
- Don't avoid giving information that health experts identify as critical for your children's health.



- **Be patient!** Children and youth do not always talk about their concerns readily.

Keep Explanations Age Appropriate

Early elementary school children

- Provide brief, simple information.
- Balance facts with reassurances that their schools and homes are safe.
- Explain that adults are there to help keep them healthy and to take care of them if they get sick.
- Tell children about the steps they can take every day to stop germs, such as washing their hands.

Upper elementary and early middle school children

- These children will be more likely to ask questions about their safety and what might happen if H1N1 Flu comes to their school or community.
- Provide assistance to separate reality from fantasy.
- Discuss efforts of school and community leaders to prevent germs from spreading.

Upper middle school and high school children

- These students are able to discuss issues in more depth.
- Refer children directly to appropriate sources of H1N1Flu facts (i.e. www.cdc.gov or www.cmchealth.net)
- Provide honest, accurate, and factual information about the current status of H1N1 Flu. Having such knowledge can help them feel a sense of control.

Specific Guidelines for Parents

- **Remain calm and reassuring.** Your children will react to and follow your reactions.
- **Make yourself available.** Your children may need extra attention from you and may want to talk about their concerns and questions.
- **Review basic hygiene practices.** Encourage children to wash their hands, cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their sleeve, and to not share food or drinks.
- **Be honest and accurate.** In the absence of factual information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality.
- **Discuss new rules or practices at school.** Many schools will be enforcing prevention habits.
- **Avoid excessive blaming.** When tensions are high, some people may try to assign blame.
- **Monitor television viewing.** Limit television viewing and access to information on the Internet.
- **Maintain a normal routine to the extent possible.** Keeping to a regular schedule can be reassuring and promotes physical health.

If your children are sick, keep them home from school!