

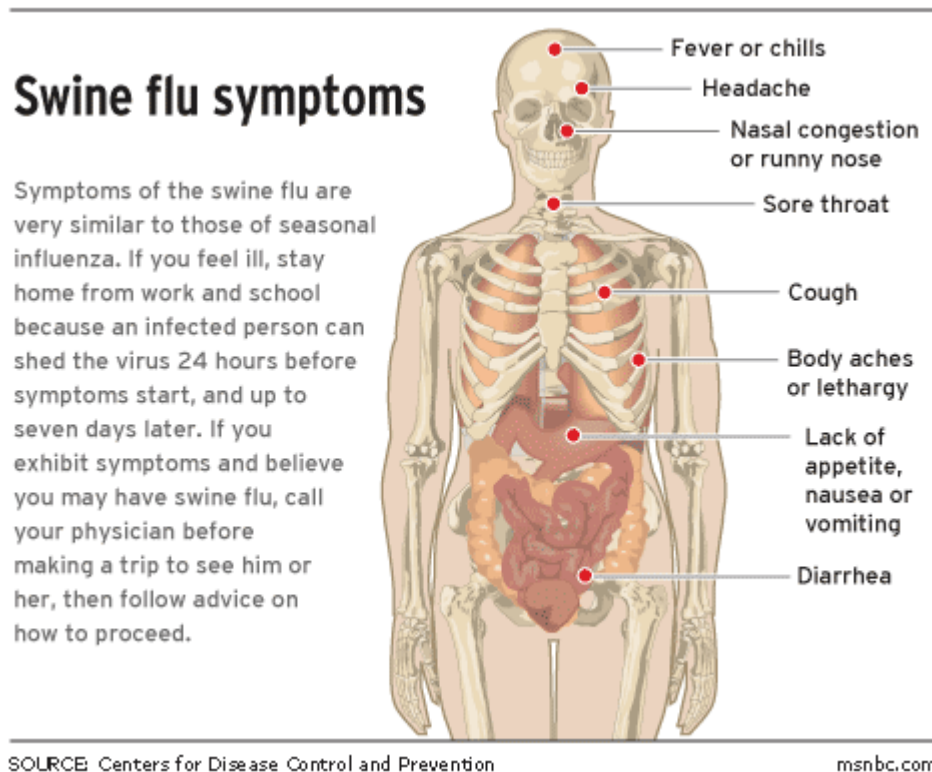
What You Need to Know about the H1N1 Virus

H1N1 flu (swine flu) has received much attention this spring. The illness caused by H1N1 infection appears comparable to that of a typical seasonal flu. Similarly, the death rate for H1N1 does not appear to be higher than that of typical flu infection. The primary concern, however, is the potential for rapid, widespread outbreak of infections with H1N1. The H1N1 virus has been present for many years in pig populations but only recently transmitted to humans. This means that humans do not have any built up immunity to the virus and potentially the virus could spread rapidly. Although current flu vaccines do not cover H1N1, researchers are currently developing a vaccine which may be available next fall.

What does all of this mean for those concerned about exposure to H1N1, particularly those planning summer travel to Louisville, Miami, and Atlanta to compete in and watch volleyball? First, do not panic or become overly stressed about H1N1. The incidence of H1N1 in these three locations is comparable to that in Hawaii (20 cases in Kentucky, 25 cases in Georgia, and 122 cases in Florida, as compared to 30 cases in Hawaii as of May 20, 2009.) Thus, the risk of contracting H1N1 in these locations remains similar to the risk of contracting the disease if you stay in Hawaii. Furthermore, although flying in an airplane may pose an increased risk of virus transmission if flying with someone with contagious H1N1, taking precautions while on the airplane and while on your trip such as these listed below will minimize the risk of contracting H1N1 while traveling this summer:

- Do not travel if you have a fever and/or flu-like symptoms. By traveling while sick, you risk your health as well as those around you.
- H1N1 spreads from person to person through coughing and sneezing from an infected individual. It can also spread when you touch an object with the virus on it and then touch your mouth or nose. Therefore, the most important precautions you can take to avoid infection with H1N1 include:
 - **Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol based sanitizer containing at least 50% alcohol.**
 - **Wash hands before eating, after bodily contact or contact with any surface that may contain the virus. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.**
 - **Do not share food or beverages. Team members should not share drinks among themselves. All drink containers should have the players name on them. If you are not sure if it is yours, throw it away and get another one.**
 - **Individually packaged or wrapped snacks are preferential to common containers of chips, fruit, etc., where people may contaminate food by handling.**
 - **Athletes rooming together should avoid sharing food, eating utensils, drinking glasses, toothbrushes, etc.**
 - **Consider using your own pillow and blanket on the airplane. Wipe off surfaces such as eating tray and arm rests with alcohol wipe.**
 - **Avoid close contact with individuals who appear ill, or have a persistent cough or sneeze. If you encounter this situation while on an airplane, inform the flight attendant. The airlines have developed policies whereby these individuals may be isolated from the other passengers.**
 - **Densely packed crowds in poorly ventilated spaces pose an increased risk of virus transmission. Although not always avoidable use your best judgment in avoiding these situations.**
- Certain situations pose no, or minimal risk:

- H1N1 virus does not spread through food, including pork and pork products. Pork products do not need to be avoided. Please note, however, humans may pass the virus on to food with improper hygiene as discussed above.
- Current drinking water treatment regulations in the U.S. provide a high level of protection from viruses. Thus, it is highly unlikely H1N1 can be acquired through drinking water.
- Similarly, properly chlorinated swimming pools provide a high level of protection from viruses. No case of transmission of H1N1 through either drinking water or swimming pool use has been documented.
- Further measures you can take to avoid H1N1 infection:
 - Keep your immune system healthy by eating well, getting plenty of sleep and exercising.
 - Keep informed about current conditions where you live and travel. Daily updates can be found on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website.
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm>
- What to do if you suspect you have H1N1:
 - Symptoms similar to “typical” flu infection



- Most cases of H1N1 cause mild illness that will resolve without medical intervention.
- More serious cases can be treated with antiviral drugs that may make the illness less severe and minimize complications.
- As with typical flu, certain populations appear to be at higher risk for serious illness and complications. These include the very young, very old, and those with chronic illness that may compromise their immune system. These individuals may consider taking extra precautions and seeking medical attention if symptoms develop.