



National Initiative for
Children's Healthcare Quality

NICHQ President and CEO Charles Homer MD, MPH Offers Advice About H1N1 Flu

Guidelines:

- The CDC recommends if you have viral respiratory symptoms—runny nose, sore throat, cough—please do not go to school or work, and also do not go to other places where you could spread the illness (public transportation, social gatherings, shopping centers, etc.).
- The CDC recommends if you are home with such symptoms, you do not need to seek medical attention unless either: (1) You are in a high risk group (pregnancy, chronic condition such as asthma or diabetes, lowered immunity either due to medication, cancer, or other source), or (2) If you have “warning signs” such as shortness of breath, chest pain, or unless your symptoms are prolonged.
- The CDC recommends that you stay home from work for 24 hours with no fever (without meds that reduce fever such as Tylenol or Motrin). There is an excellent, regularly updated advice sheet at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/sick.htm>
- Pregnant women are at greater risk of complications with H1N1. Pregnant women who have flu symptoms should contact their doctor; treatment with antiviral medications is recommended, especially in the first 24-48 hours after onset of symptoms. If you are pregnant and exposed to the flu, contact your doctor as well. Some doctors are recommending prophylactic (i.e., preventive) treatment with antiviral medications; others recommend waiting for the onset of symptoms.
- The H1N1 vaccine has been available thus far in only limited supplies. I personally strongly recommend that everyone obtain this vaccine once it is available. At this time, those who are pregnant should contact their providers and seek to get immunized as soon as it is available.
- I also recommend that everyone get a regular, seasonal flu shot.
- General prevention measures include: hand washing, avoiding contact with ill individuals, and, according to the CDC, avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth.

Additional Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> and http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/2009-10/pdf/what_to_do_if_you_get_sick.pdf

Flu.gov: <http://www.flu.gov/>

About NICHQ

Founded in 1999, the National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality (NICHQ) is an action-oriented organization dedicated to achieving a world in which all children receive the healthcare they need. Led by experienced pediatric healthcare professionals, NICHQ's mission is to improve children's health by improving the systems responsible for the delivery of children's healthcare. For more information, visit www.nichq.org.