

Interim CDC Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education and Post-secondary Educational Institutions in Response to Human Infections with Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Virus

August 5, 2009 5:00 PM ET

On this Page

- [Background](#)
- [Interim Recommendations](#)
- [Large gatherings](#)

This document has been updated in accordance with the [CDC Recommendations for the Amount of Time Persons with Influenza-Like Illness Should be Away from Others](#). This document provides interim guidance and will be updated as needed.

For the purpose of this guidance, the term “institutions” is used to refer to institutions of higher education, such as universities, colleges, and community colleges and other post-secondary educational institutions, such as proprietary and postsecondary institutions of higher education.

Background

This document provides interim guidance to institutions on suggested means to reduce the spread of the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus in their communities. These recommendations are based on the recognition of sustained human to human transmission of this new virus, which has spread across much of the United States, and information that suggests most cases of illness from this virus are similar in severity to seasonal influenza. However, recommendations may need to be revised as more information becomes available.

 [TOP](#)

Interim Recommendations:

- CDC is not currently recommending that institutions cancel or dismiss classes or other large gatherings.
- If confirmed cases of novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection or a large number of cases of influenza like illness (ILI) (i.e. fever with either cough or sore throat) occur among students, faculty, or staff or in the community, institutions officials should consult with state and local health officials regarding an appropriate response.
- Because the spread of novel influenza A (H1N1) within a health professions school may pose special concerns, school administrators are strongly encouraged to contact their state and local public health authorities if they suspect that cases of ILI are present on their campuses.
- Students, faculty or staff who live either on or off campus and who have ILI should self-isolate (i.e., stay away from others) in their dorm room or home [for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone](#) except to get medical care or for other necessities (their fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). They should keep away from others as much as possible. This is to keep from making others sick.
- If possible, persons with ILI who wish to seek medical care should contact their health care provider or campus health services to report illness by telephone or other remote means before seeking care. Institutions should assure that all students, faculty and staff receive messages about what they should do if they become ill with ILI, including reporting ILI to health services.
- If persons with ILI must leave their home or dorm room (for example, to seek medical care or other necessities) they should cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. A surgical loose-fitting mask can be helpful for persons who have access to these, but a tissue or other covering is appropriate as well. (See [Interim Guidance for H1N1 Flu \(Swine Flu\): Taking Care of a Sick Person in Your Home](#)).
- Roommates, household members, or those caring for an ill person should follow guidance developed for caring for sick persons at home. (See [Interim Guidance for H1N1 Flu \(Swine Flu\): Taking Care of a Sick Person in Your Home](#)).
- Persons who are at high risk of complications from novel influenza A (H1N1) infection (for example, persons with certain chronic medical conditions, children less than 5 years, persons 65 years or older, and pregnant women) should consider their risk of exposure to novel influenza if they attend public gatherings in communities where novel influenza A virus is circulating. In communities with several reported cases of novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection, persons who are at risk of complications from influenza should consider staying away from public gatherings.



Large gatherings

On the basis of what is currently known about the ongoing spread of novel influenza A (H1N1) and, as a means to prevent the further spread of disease on and off campus,

institutions should encourage persons with ILI to stay home and away from large gatherings. Persons who are sick should be instructed to limit their contact with other people as much as possible and to [stay home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone](#) except to get medical care or for other necessities (their fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine).

.In addition, they should be reminded to use appropriate respiratory and hand hygiene. (See [H1N1 Flu and You](#)). Gatherings may include graduations and commencement activities, concerts, sporting events, and other gatherings where close contact is likely among a large number of attendees.

Large public gatherings offer a good opportunity for officials and event organizers to deliver key educational messages about measures attendees can take to help protect themselves and their family members from novel influenza A (H1N1) infection, including active promotion of good hygiene practices. (See [H1N1 Flu and You](#))

Institutions should consider the following in preparation for possible outbreaks of novel influenza A (H1N1):

- Establishing a relationship with their state and local health departments
- Keeping informed regarding the evolving situation through regular visits to the [CDC's H1N1 Flu web site](#)
- Developing educational messages in a variety of formats regarding the illness and how to reduce the spread of influenza. (See [H1N1 Flu and You](#)).
- Alternative educational delivery such as distance learning, web-based learning, or other ways to increase social distancing.
- Planning for assistance for students with ILI, including provision for meals, medications, and other care.
- Developing contingency plans for how to reduce exposure of non-ill students, staff and faculty to ill students, staff and faculty.

For more information, see: [H1N1 Flu Guidance](#)

Novel H1N1 Flu: CDC Response

CDC continues to take aggressive action to respond to the outbreak. CDC's response goals are to reduce the spread and severity of illness, and to provide information to help health care providers, public health officials and the public address the challenges posed by this new public health threat.

CDC is issuing updated [interim guidance](#) in response to the rapidly evolving situation.

Clinician Guidance

CDC has issued interim guidance for clinicians on [identifying and caring for patients](#) with novel H1N1, in addition to providing interim [guidance on the use of antiviral drugs](#). Influenza antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) with activity against influenza viruses, including novel influenza H1N1 viruses. The priority use for influenza antiviral drugs during this outbreak is to treat people hospitalized with influenza illness, and to treat people at increased risk of severe illness, including pregnant women, young children, and people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes and other metabolic diseases, heart or lung disease, kidney disease, weakened immune systems, and persons with neurologic or neuromuscular disease.

Public Guidance

CDC has provided guidance for the public on [what to do if they become sick with flu-like symptoms](#), including infection with novel H1N1. CDC also has issued instructions on [taking care of a sick person at home](#) and the use of [facemasks and respirators to reduce novel influenza A \(H1N1\) transmission](#). Everyone should take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs, including frequent hand washing and people who are sick should stay home and avoid contact with others in order to limit further spread of the disease.

Testing

CDC has developed a PCR diagnostic test kit to detect this novel H1N1 virus and has now distributed test kits to all states in the U.S. and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The test kits are being shipped internationally as well. This will allow states and other countries to test for this new virus.

Vaccine

Vaccines are a very important part of a response to novel H1N1 influenza and the U.S. Government is aggressively taking early steps in the process to manufacture a novel H1N1 vaccine, working closely with manufacturers. CDC isolated the new H1N1 virus, made a candidate vaccine virus strain that can be used to create vaccine, and is working with other agencies and industry to begin scaling up for testing and production of a vaccine. Making vaccine is a long multi-step process requiring several months to complete. CDC has developed [guidance for state and local public health departments](#) to assist them in planning for a novel H1N1 influenza vaccination campaign. Additional guidance is forthcoming.

Stockpile Deployment

CDC has deployed 25 percent of the supplies in the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) to all states in the continental United States and U.S. territories. This included antiviral

drugs, personal protective equipment, and respiratory protection devices. These supplies and medicines will help states and U.S. territories respond to novel H1N1 virus.

Surveillance

Novel influenza A (H1N1) activity is being detected through CDC's [routine influenza surveillance systems](#) and reported weekly in FluView. CDC tracks U.S. influenza activity through multiple systems. While our influenza surveillance systems indicate that overall influenza activity is decreasing in the United States, novel H1N1 outbreaks are ongoing in different parts of the U.S., in some cases with intense influenza-like activity. Nearly 100 percent of the influenza viruses being detected now are novel H1N1 viruses.

School Dismissal Monitoring

CDC and the U.S. Department of Education, in collaboration with state and local health and education agencies and national non-governmental organizations, have implemented a school dismissal monitoring system for the 2009-2010 school year. This monitoring system will generate real-time, national summary data daily on the number of school dismissals and the number of impacted students and teachers. To report a school dismissal click [here](#).