

Official H1N1 Communications:

If You're Sick, Stay Home

It is strongly recommended that employees stay home if they are experiencing H1N1 virus symptoms. For this reason, we have developed the following Q&A to address frequently asked questions regarding the H1N1 virus and what you should do if you develop symptoms.

SHSSR Employee Health Services is offering the seasonal flu vaccine early this year to help reduce your risk of getting the flu this fall. In addition, we will be offering the H1N1 vaccine when supplies become available. We will distribute additional information regarding the H1N1 vaccine when it is received and will prioritize vaccinations in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines.

Important necessary communications from Sutter Health and the Sutter Health Sacramento Sierra Region are located on the Intranet. A link can be found on the home page of every facility Intranet site. If you have additional questions or concerns, please talk to your manager or contact Employee Health at (916) 733-3715.

What are the signs and symptoms of H1N1?

- **Symptoms of H1N1** are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu, which include: fever of 100.5 F or higher, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue. Some have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

What if you think you have come in contact with someone who has H1N1?

- **Monitor yourself** daily for fever and other influenza type symptoms.

What if you develop influenza symptoms?

- **Stay home** if you develop flu-like symptoms.
 - Take over-the-counter cold and flu medications according to the package instructions to help lessen some symptoms such as cough and congestion. However, these medications will not lessen how infectious a person is.
 - Get plenty of rest.
 - Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.

- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and discard, or cough into the crook of your arm. Clean hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub -- especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing.
- **Consult your doctor** if you are pregnant or have any medical conditions that could put you at risk of developing complications from the flu (high-risk conditions include: pregnancy, asthma, diabetes mellitus, chronic cardiopulmonary disease, immuno-suppression, liver/kidney problems, hematologic/neuromuscular conditions, body mass index above 35).
- **Consult your doctor** if your flu symptoms become severe.

When can I return to work?

- **You may return to work** after seven days of illness onset or 24 hours after fever has resolved, whichever is greater (as recommended by CDC and California Department of Public Health).

How do I protect myself at work?

- **Use airborne *and* contact precautions** for suspected/confirmed cases of H1N1 and other influenza types.
 - Airborne Precautions – Staff should use an **N-95 mask** when caring for patients with flu symptoms. Patients should also be wearing a surgical mask.
 - Contact Precautions – Use gloves for all contact with patients and their environment. Perform hand hygiene after removing gloves (soap and water OR alcohol-based product).
- **Careful hand hygiene** for contact with suspected/confirmed H1N1 patients is vital before and after patient contact. As always, if hands are visibly soiled, use soap and water. Alcohol-based products can also be used if hands are not visibly soiled.
- **Room Cleaning:** after caring for patients with flu symptoms, glove up and carefully clean the room following the directions on the Cavicide disinfectant cleaner. Don't forget door handles!

For further information: See CDC Web site: Interim Guidance for H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu): Taking Care of a Sick Person in Your Home

Sept. 24, 2009