

## Flu Season is Starting. Get Ready Now!

The flu season is starting and will last through the fall and winter. More than one kind of flu virus will be spreading this season, including seasonal flu and the 2009 H1N1 flu. If you get the flu, you can get sick and can spread the flu to others at home, at work, and in the community. Symptoms of flu include fever or chills *and* cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

We are asking that you plan to stay home if you are sick until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medicines (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).

Also remember to cover your coughs and sneezes and wash your hands often with soap and water. Use an alcohol-based hand cleaner if soap and water are not available. If a severe flu outbreak hits our community, we will take additional steps to avoid spreading the flu virus in the workplace.

You need to prepare as well.

- ▶ Get the vaccine for seasonal flu [*insert information about vaccination clinics at the workplace or other ways your business can support getting vaccinated for seasonal flu*]
- ▶ Get the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available, if you are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications. People at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes). For more information about priority groups for vaccinations, visit [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm).
- ▶ Make plans to care for sick household members or for children if schools dismiss students or child care programs close.
- ▶ Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home. Have the following items on hand: a supply of fever-reducing medicines that contain acetaminophen or ibuprofen, alcohol-based hand cleaners, tissues, and other items that may be useful and help avoid the need to make trips out in public while you are sick.
- ▶ Learn about the flu and what you can do. To find out more about preparing for the flu, go to [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).

If you have any questions about policies or action steps we can take, please contact *Mary Johnston, Karen Hanes, or Sandy Flaherty*.

By working together, we can protect our workforce while having a productive fall and winter.

## If You Are Not Feeling Well . . .

### **Do you have a fever or chills AND a cough or sore throat?**

If “yes,” you may have the flu. Symptoms of flu include fever or chills *and* cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

### **Please do NOT come to work if you are sick with a fever AND cough or sore throat.**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that sick employees stay home if they are sick with flu-like illness until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medicines (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).

If you are at higher risk for complications from the flu and you are sick, contact your health care provider as soon as possible. Children younger than 5 years of age, pregnant women, people of any age with chronic medical conditions (such as pulmonary disease, asthma, diabetes, neuromuscular disorders, or heart disease), and people 65 years of age and older are more likely to get complications from the flu. Your health care provider may prescribe antiviral drugs, and they are most effective when started within 2 days of getting sick.

In addition, emergency warning signs that the sick person needs urgent medical attention include:

- ▶ *Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath*
- ▶ *Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen*
- ▶ *Sudden dizziness*
- ▶ *Confusion*
- ▶ *Severe or persistent vomiting*
- ▶ *Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough*

Contact *your family physician* if you have any questions.

For more information about caring for someone sick with flu, visit [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance\\_homecare.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm)

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## Staying Healthy . . .

### Important Actions to Take to Stay Healthy

- Every time you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and throw used tissues in the trash.
- Wash your hands often, especially after you cough or sneeze.
  - Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Use alcohol-based hand cleaners if soap and water are not available.
  - Wash your hands before and after preparing food or eating, after using the restroom, before and after touching your nose, eyes, or mouth, and after touching items that may have been exposed to bodily fluids
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Routinely clean your computer keyboard, telephone, and desktop. The flu virus can live on hard objects up to 8 hours. Flu viruses may be spread when a person touches a hard surface, such as a desk or doorknob, or an object, such as a keyboard or pen where the virus has landed and then touches your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Get vaccinated for seasonal flu. For more information about seasonal flu vaccination, visit [www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm). *[insert information about vaccination clinics at the workplace or other ways your business can support getting vaccinated]*.
- Get the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available, if you are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications. People at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes). For more information about priority groups for vaccination, visit [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm)
- If you are at higher risk for complications from the flu, talk to your doctor about what you will need to do if you get sick. People at higher risk for flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes).

Contact your family physician if you have any questions.

For more information, visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).