

What Pregnant Women Should Know About H1N1 Flu Virus

What is H1N1?

H1N1 flu (also called Swine flu) is a type of flu. Like all flu, it is caused by a virus. Flu viruses spread mainly when people who have the illness cough or sneeze. Sometimes people become infected when they touch an infected surface (like a phone receiver) and then touch their mouths or noses. A person can NOT get H1N1 by eating or cooking pork.

What if I get this new virus and I am pregnant?

Pregnant women and infants are at high risk for medical problems from the flu. Pregnant women and infants have been reported to get very sick with the H1N1 flu outbreak. These problems may include early labor or severe pneumonia or even death.

Get vaccinated

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) strongly suggests all pregnant women get the seasonal flu shot called a vaccine.
- A new vaccine for H1N1 should be ready in the fall. The CDC suggests all pregnant women get this vaccine as well.
- Vaccines also help protect your new baby who gets antibodies from you



What can I do to protect myself, my baby and my family?

Take these every day steps to help prevent the spread of germs and protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based gel hand cleaners are also good to use.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid any contact with sick people.
- Stock up on household, health, and emergency supplies, such as a thermometer, water in containers, Tylenol®, and non-perishable foods.

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs

Washing with soap and water:

- Use warm water
- Wash for 15 to 20 seconds

Using alcohol-based gel hand cleaner:

- Don't add water
- Rub the gel on your hands until dry

What are the symptoms of H1N1?

Symptoms are like seasonal flu and include the following:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Headaches
- Chills and fatigue
- Sometimes, diarrhea and vomiting

What should I do if I get sick?

- If you get sick with flu-like symptoms, stay home, limit contact with others, and *please call your clinic or OB Triage (505) 272-2460 for instructions before coming to the hospital.*

How is H1N1 flu treated?

- Treat any fever right away. Tylenol® (acetaminophen) is the best treatment of fever in pregnancy.
- Drink plenty of fluids to replace those you lose when you are sick.
- You might need an antiviral drug such as Tamiflu® (oseltamivir). Antiviral drugs fight against the flu by keeping the germs from growing in your body. These medicines can make you feel better faster and make your symptoms milder but do not keep you from getting sick.
- These medicines work best when started soon after symptoms begin (within two [2] days), but they may also be given to very sick or high risk people (like pregnant women) even after 48 hours.

When should I get emergency medical care?

If you have these signs, seek emergency medical care right away. *Please call OB Triage before coming to the hospital (505) 272-2460.*

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or continual vomiting
- Decreased or no movement of your baby
- A high fever that is not responding to Tylenol®



Breastfeeding can help your baby

Flu can be very serious in young babies. Babies who are breastfed do not get as sick and are sick less often from many sicknesses including the flu than do babies who are not breastfed. Women who are not sick with the flu should be encouraged to initiate breastfeeding early and feed often.

Breastfeeding protects babies. Breast milk passes on protection in the form of antibodies from the mother to a baby. Antibodies help fight off infection.

Resources:

March of Dimes http://www.marchofdimes.com/pnhec/188_10596.asp

Center for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/pregnant.htm>

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