

Novel H1N1 Pediatric Patient Flu Facts

Definition: Novel H1N1 is a viral infection that causes a cough, sore throat, runny nose and fever.

Cause: Novel H1N1 is caused by the H1N1 virus. After exposure (close contact), people come down with respiratory symptoms in 1 to 7 days. It is not caused by eating pork.

How to Know That Your Child has Novel H1N1: If novel H1N1 is widespread in your community and your child has flu symptoms with a **fever**, then he or she probably has novel H1N1. **Tests:** You don't need to get any special flu tests unless your child is sick enough to be hospitalized.

Seeing a Doctor: You don't need to call or see your child's doctor, unless your child is **high risk** (see list) or develops a complication of the flu (see "Call Your Child's Doctor" section). Always call before coming in, because going to the office or ER needlessly can expose your child to novel H1N1.

How to Treat H1N1 Flu: The treatment of novel H1N1 is no different from treating the symptoms of the common cold. Treat the cough, sore throat and fever in the usual way. Encourage adequate fluids to prevent dehydration. Antibiotics are not helpful. Do not use aspirin.

Antiviral Medicine (such as Tamiflu): The CDC recommends antiviral medicines be considered for all **high risk** children (see list) who come down with novel H1N1 symptoms **or** live with someone who has novel H1N1. **Low risk** children recover fine without Tamiflu and only need it if they develop serious symptoms (such as pneumonia). Antiviral medicines must be started within 48 hours of the start of flu symptoms to have an effect. They usually reduce the time your child is sick by 1 or 2 days. They improve the symptoms but do not eliminate them.

High Risk Children for Complications from Novel H1N1: Children with lung disease (such as asthma), heart disease, weak immune system (such as cancer), diabetes, sickle cell disease, other chronic diseases, pregnant teens, or young children less than 2 years old.

Expected Course: The fever lasts 2 to 3 days, the runny or stuffy nose 1 to 2 weeks, and the cough 2 to 3 weeks. So far the rate of complications is no higher than with regular seasonal flu.

Prevention of Spread: Stay home when sick. Your child may return to child care or school after the fever is gone for at least 24 hours. (CDC)

Call Your Child's Doctor Now (Night or Day) if:

- ◆ Your child looks or acts very sick
- ◆ Breathing becomes difficult or fast or causes retractions (sucking in between the ribs)
- ◆ Dehydration occurs (no urine in 12 hours, dry mouth, no tears)

Call Your Child's Doctor During the Day if:

- ◆ You think your child needs to be seen
- ◆ Your child is in the HIGH RISK group and has flu symptoms
- ◆ Earache or sinus pain occurs
- ◆ Fever lasts more than 3 days or returns after going away
- ◆ Your child becomes worse

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