

Communities and the Workplace

H1N1 Swine Flu is a new strain of the influenza virus and has symptoms similar to yearly seasonal flu. Symptoms include fever greater than 100 degrees, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue with some people also having diarrhea and vomiting.

Protect Yourself

- Stay home if you are sick, until at least 24 hours after your fever goes away without taking fever-reducing medicines.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Put your used tissue in the waste basket, and wash your hands with soap.
- If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve or elbow, not your hand.
- Regularly wash your hands with soap, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Minimize close contact with those who are sick.
- Get vaccinated when a vaccine becomes available.

What Workplaces Can Do

- Encourage employees to stay home when they are sick. Determine if your leave policies support an employee's willingness to stay home when ill.
- Educate employees on how to protect themselves using posters, handouts, employee health and wellness programs, and company websites, etc.
- Ensure access to hand washing facilities and adequate supplies of tissues, disinfectants, disposable towels, hand soap and/or hand sanitizers, and proper trash receptacles.
- Establish regular communications updates to staff about the current H1N1 Swine Flu situation, impacts to their workplace, new policies or procedures, and putting in place a process for employees to ask question and report rumors.
- Develop a H1N1 Swine Flu plan that includes such things as determining and maintaining essential business operations and employee functions in the event a significant number of employees are out ill, what to do if employees become ill at work, emergency communications, and alternate workplaces.
- Establish a relationship with your local health department to understand your company's role and responsibilities during an H1N1 Swine Flu outbreak in your community.

What Communities Can Do

- Encourage residents not to attend meetings, faith-based services, or public gatherings if they are ill.
- Ensure access to hand washing facilities and adequate supplies of tissues, disinfectants, disposable towels, hand soap and/or hand sanitizers, and proper trash receptacles.
- Work with local authorities to become part of a communication network that keeps the community informed.
- Collaborate with your local health department to ensure those most at risk have access to health services.

More Information Is Available

- The Florida Department of Health's website: www.myflusafety.com
- The toll free Florida Flu Information Line, 1-877-352-3581, is available 24/7 for recorded messages, and operators are available 8am to 8pm eastern standard time.
- Your local county health department: www.floridashealth.com
- The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention website: http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/general_info.htm