



H1N1 Symptoms - When to Seek Medical Care

With the pandemic H1N1 virus circulating throughout Ohio, it's important to recognize the symptoms of flu and stay home when sick. What are the differences between seasonal flu, pandemic H1N1 flu and the common cold? When is the time to seek medical care outside the home?

The symptoms of the pandemic H1N1 virus are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include **fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue**. Some people have reported **diarrhea and vomiting associated with H1N1**, these symptoms have been more common in children. Severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with H1N1 and seasonal flu infection. The common cold does not normally have fever or severe illness associated with it.

When exhibiting flu symptoms, either seasonal or pandemic H1N1, stay home from work or keep children home from school. If symptoms become more severe, the individual is pregnant or you have an underlying chronic medical condition, seek medical attention immediately. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

In adults, emergency warning signs that need 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

If you have had the flu, either seasonal or pandemic H1N1, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends staying home for 24 hours after fever is gone without using fever-reducing medication. The CDC is discouraging the practice of requiring a permission slip from a doctor to return to school or work during this flu season to ease the burden on the health care system.