

Protecting Yourself from H1N1 Flu

H1N1 Flu (swine flu) is a respiratory illness. The steps you take to help protect yourself and prevent its spread are the same steps you would take to prevent the spread of regular seasonal flu and other respiratory illnesses:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

It's important to wash your hands in a way that will best protect you from germs. Wash your hands, using soap and warm water. Wash thoroughly for 15 to 20 seconds. One effective way to know you've washed long enough—and an easy technique to teach children—is to sing “Happy Birthday” twice in your head while washing. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.

