

South Central PA Task Force H1N1 Pandemic Fact Sheet October 2009



- The South Central PA Task Force (SCTF) takes an all-hazards approach with its emergency preparedness program, which addresses planning, prevention, response and recovery for events in South Central PA that exceed local capabilities.
 - The SCTF and its various subcommittees have been continually preparing for potential influenza events.
 - The SCTF continuously monitors influenza reports from the World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
 - The SCTF is working closely with the PA Dept. of Health (DOH) to ensure preparations are thorough.

- Prevention is key in protecting against the flu. Get a seasonal flu vaccination and an H1N1 flu vaccination this fall.

- Social distancing and good hygiene are imperative to decrease the spread of influenza.
 - Spread of influenza is mainly from person-to-person contact through coughing or sneezing. Try to avoid close contact with sick people. Stay home and do not go to work, school, stores or other places if you are sick.
 - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water (Sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice to ensure sufficient hand/soap contact while you are washing your hands). Alcohol-based hand cleaners/sanitizers are also effective. Avoid touching surfaces and then touching your face. Touching something with the flu virus on it and then touching your own mouth or nose may cause infection.
 - Practice good cough etiquette. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it and wash your hands.
 - Frequently clean and disinfect common surfaces including phones, door knobs, light switches, rails, handles, counters, coffee pots, children’s toys, etc. with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.

- Most cases of H1N1 are able to be managed at home and under the care of a family doctor.
 - The symptoms of H1N1 in people are similar to the symptoms of regular seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting.
 - If you get sick with these symptoms, call your doctor and limit your contact with other people as much as possible. **Do not** report to your local emergency room. The CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities (your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
 - According to the CDC, emergency warning signs to get medical care right away for a sick **child** 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

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- According to the CDC, emergency warning signs for **adults** who 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 patients do not follow the above recommended CDC guidelines and report to the hospital, they will not necessarily be admitted.
- Stay informed: visit www.cdc.gov or www.h1n1inpa.com; or call the PA DOH at 1-877-724-3258.

Sources: www.cdc.gov and www.flu.gov