FLU TRAVELS

Flu viruses constantly mutate, making it tough for our immune defenses to recognize the virus and combat it. Since the current strain of the H1N1 virus (known as swine flu) is relatively new, it may be more contagious than seasonal flu, although it seems no more virulent and most cases should be resolved without significant medical intervention. Here is a look at how flu infections spread:

**WHAT DO YOU HAVE?**

Flu viruses enter via the mouth of an infected person. They multiply in the small intestine; symptoms can appear in a few hours, but usually take a day; food poisoning typically is a bacterial infection, such as E. coli.

**Influenza**
- Antiviral medications can help people feel better if taken within 48 hours of onset of symptoms
- Headache
- High fever
- Dry cough
- Chest pains
- Chills
- Severe fatigue
- Severe aches
- Chills
- Very sore throat
- Pus on tonsils

**Cold**
- Colds are caused by a different virus; symptoms are less severe — and they come on more gradually than flu
- Sneezing
- Stuffy nose
- Hacking cough
- Mild sore throat
- Mild fatigue

**Strep throat**
- A sore throat, but no stuffy nose, may mean it's a streptococcal bacterial infection — antibiotics can help
- High fever
- Pus on tonsils
- Very sore throat

**Stomach flu**
- Virus enters via mouth and multiplies in the small intestine; symptoms can appear in a few hours, but usually take a day; food poisoning typically is a bacterial infection, such as E. coli
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea

**NOTE:** H1N1 virus also causes some less severe — and the y come can help streptococcal bacterial nose, may mean it's a infection — antibio tics A sore throat, but no stuffy

**SYMPTOMS TO CONSIDER**
- Headache
- High fever
- Dry cough
- Headache
- Very sore throat
- Gastrointestinal distress

**FLU TRAVELS**

Studies of office equipment found that 66% of viruses survived for an hour; 33% survived for 18 hours.

**WAYS TO AVOID FLU**

Health officials recommend most people get a flu shot — including for the H1N1 virus.

**Vaccination**
- Vaccination provides up to 90% protection
- Swine flu shots should be ready by October
- It takes about two weeks before protection begins
- H1N1 vaccination will be in two doses, a couple weeks apart; healthy adults may only need one H1N1 vaccination
- Seasonal flu vaccination is one shot, but for children under 9 they may need two seasonal flu shots, bringing the total to four

**WASH HANDS**

Wash hands five times a day for at least 20 seconds; this is what it takes to prevent the spread of germs and viruses; less than half the people wash this long and this often

**WEAR MASK**

Masks can be worn by sick people so any droplets they expel do not easily land on objects or people; most masks are not as effective if worn by people who are well trying to avoid breathing in a virus

**SOURCES**

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Central Laboratory of Virology, Facts.com