

1. My kids (I) were exposed to swine flu. (updated 9/9/09)

- **What should I do for my (self or kids)?** Watch for signs of flu such as fever, cough and sore throat. Stay home if they develop. The time from exposure to becoming sick (incubation period) is about two days.
- **Do they (I) need to be tested?** No. Even if you develop symptoms, you probably do not need to be tested unless you become severely ill.

2. (School inquiry), we have a confirmed case of swine flu. (9/9/09)

- **Should we send a letter out to all parents?** No
- **What other precautions should we take?** Routine cleaning and routine infection control measures such as making hand sanitizers available to ALL students and faculty, making tissues and trash cans available, encouraging ill students and faculty to stay home.

3. What are the signs/symptoms of swine flu? Fever and cough, headache, runny nose, sore throat, body aches.

4. When should I seek medical care? (9/9/09)

- Use the same judgment you would use during a typical flu season.
- Do not seek medical care if you are not ill or have mild symptoms for which you would not ordinarily seek medical care.
- If you have more severe symptoms such as increased shortness of breathe, are unable to keep liquids down, or are feeling more seriously ill, call your health care provider to discuss your symptoms and if you need to be evaluated.
- Also, if you are pregnant or have a chronic medical condition you may want to consult with your provider.
- If the following flu-like symptoms are mild, **medical attention is not typically required.**
 - Runny nose or nasal stuffiness
 - Low-grade fever for less than 3 days
 - Mild headache
 - Body aches
 - Mild stomach upset

5. Where can I go to get tested? (9/9/2009)

- Most people do not need to be tested -- only the very ill need to be tested.
- Your local public health department cannot test for H1N1.
- The rapid in-office test does not accurately detect H1N1, so it should not be used to rule in or rule out H1N1. Some commercial labs can test for H1N1, your doctor will know if the lab they use can do this, but results take a week to come back and by then you will probably be better.
- Schools, day cares and employers should consider NOT requiring a test or note to allow someone to return for two reasons:
 - This will over burden medical providers.
 - There is no quick test to rule out H1N1.

6. Should I wear a mask? (9/9/09)

- Facemasks (surgical masks) may prevent the wearer from coughing on others, and may protect the nose and mouth of the wearer from contact with other people's coughs. They do not offer complete protection because they do not fit tightly to the face, allowing very small air particles to leak in around the edge of the mask.
- Public Health officials recommends the following people use facemasks:
 - Sick people if they must be near others at home, or if they must leave the home (such as for an appointment with a health care provider).
 - Caregivers of a person ill with influenza – when the caregiver leaves the home. This is to prevent spreading flu to others in case the caregiver is in the early stages of infection.
- When using facemasks:
 - Change masks when they become moist
 - Do not leave masks dangling around the neck
 - Throw away used masks
 - After touching or throwing away a used mask, wash hands or use alcohol sanitizer

Whenever possible, do not rely on the use of facemasks or respirators alone to provide respiratory protection against novel influenza virus infection. The best way to prevent exposure to influenza is to avoid contact with ill people. Other steps include avoiding crowded settings and washing your hands frequently.

7. When will vaccine be available for swine flu? (9/9/09)

- Vaccine is currently being produced by five different manufacturers and testing is under way.
- We expect to begin receiving vaccine sometime in October.
- The first shipments will be small and designated for health care workers and emergency responders.
- It is expected that vaccine supply will quickly increase and vaccine eventually will be available through the usual flu vaccine sources, such as doctor's offices, pharmacies and health departments.

8. (School inquiry), what is the recommendation for closure due to absenteeism? (9/9/09)

- School dismissal is a school decision made in consultation with public health.
- Schools should use the same guidelines they always use during flu season when making decisions about dismissal.
- The recommended length of time to remain closed is a minimum of five days. If a decision to dismiss school is made all extracurricular activities, including sports, should be canceled.
- If a school is dismissed, school officials will need to go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) school dismissal site and complete the online form. This is so the CDC and the Department of Education can track school dismissal.

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/dismissal_form/dismissal_form.htm

9. Why are they not closing the schools with so many children out sick? (9/9/09)

- School dismissal is a Knox County school system decision made in consultation with public health. Two of the primary considerations when making this decision are:
 - Is student and/or teacher absenteeism at a point where it severely impacts student learning?
 - Will closing school reduce the amount of disease in the community?
- School closures are never taken lightly and the wellbeing of students, staff and parents is a priority in making these decisions.
- The Knox County Schools and the Knox County Health Department communicate regularly on this important matter and will take action as is appropriate.

10. I am pregnant and my children have been exposed to swine flu what should I do? (9/9/09)

Watch for signs of flu (fever, cough, runny nose, and sore throat) in your children and keep them home if they develop symptoms. ONLY IF your children develop flu symptoms, consult with your obstetrician about possibly taking post exposure Tamiflu antiviral medication.

11. If my family will be traveling and/or flying soon. (9/9/09)

- **What should we do?** Go ahead and travel. Make sure to take hand sanitizer or sanitizer wipes with you. Consider not traveling if you develop symptoms of the flu (fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, body aches). Avoid sick persons.
- **Should we take Tamiflu with us, just in case?** No, even if you become ill, most people will not require treatment.

12. What guidelines should be used to decide if an event/game should be canceled? (9/9/09)

- If so many participants are ill that you don't have enough players to field a team, or there just won't be enough people well enough to hold the event, you should consider cancellation.
- Organized athletics need to decide how to handle game cancellation due to illness on only one team.
- Athletes who are ill should not attend practice or games, even as a spectator.

13. Can I get the H1N1 vaccine if I already think I had H1N1? YES. There is no harm in getting the flu shot if you think or know you have had H1N1 flu.