

## **PHONE NUMBERS:**

- ❖ **Hillsborough Health Department: 908-369-5652**
- ❖ **NJ Department of Health: 609-588-7500**
- ❖ **HOTLINE (NOW OPEN): 1-866-321-9571**
- ❖ **SHOTLINE (NOW OPEN FOR GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT LOCAL CLINICS, WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PHONE REGISTRATION): 908-533-9330**

## **NOVEL H1N1 FLU (SWINE FLU) UPDATE**

Last spring, the World Health Organization declared a PANDEMIC, or worldwide sustained person to person transmission of the Novel H1N1 Flu virus (previously called Swine Flu).

Due to the much appreciated cooperation of patients, parents, school nurses, and area physicians last spring, the virus was identified and is now determined to be present in the population. Also, the information collected from patients helped to determine that the virus was not causing severe infection in most people. The Federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is predicting that the Novel H1N1 flu will return this fall to infect many more people, causing more illness, and loss of time from school and work. If there are extensive absences from schools, there could be school closures. Workplaces may also be affected by absenteeism. Taking all of this information, and in anticipation of the virus resurging this fall, the following changes were made. Please keep in mind that studies are ongoing, and if the virus begins to cause more severe illness, there will be further changes.

1. Testing of individuals with symptoms of flu will not be recommended unless the patient is in the intensive care unit of a hospital. This is a change from testing recommendations which were used to see if the virus was present in the general population. Since we now know that the virus is present, we want to know if it is causing more severe illness. That is the reason for focusing testing upon those who are severely ill. (Some physicians may still elect to test for clinical purposes).

FLU SYMPTOMS INCLUDE: Fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more with cough, and/or sore throat. It may also include runny and stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, vomiting, and diarrhea.

2. People who have symptoms of flu should stay home from school or work until the fever resolves for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicines with acetaminophen or ibuprophen (Aspirin or other salicylate containing medications should not be given to children under age 19 without physician orders)-you should plan to stay home for 3 to 5 days if you do get a case of flu which is not severe. This changed from the recommendation to remain at home for 7 days after symptoms resolved, because the illness caused by the virus appeared not to be severe after studying the cases last spring. However, if the virus causes more severe illness in the future, the 7 day recommendation may be reinstated.
3. *It is recommended that individuals with chronic health conditions contact their physician immediately for advice should they come down with symptoms of flu. The use of flu medications such as Tamiflu must be initiated quickly to have an effect. See [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu) for recommendations on use of flu medications.*
4. *EMERGENCY WARNING SIGNS- Individuals who have had or have flulike symptoms, should seek medical care urgently if they have any one of these signs. Please see [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu.sick.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu.sick.htm) for updates and changes.*

**CHILDREN:**

- *Fast breathing, or trouble breathing*
- *Bluish skin color*
- *Not drinking enough fluids*
- *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*
- *Fever with rash*

**ADULTS:**

- *Difficulty breathing/shortness of breath*
- *Pain or pressure in chest or abdomen*
- *Sudden dizziness*
- *Confusion*
- *Severe or persistent vomiting*

5. There is a vaccination for this virus which is has now been approved by the FDA. It was too late to include it in the seasonal flu shot, so it will need to be a separate shot or 2 shots (children under 10 years old will need 2 shots, 4 weeks apart; Anyone 10 and over will only need one shot). Some physicians have registered to receive vaccine, others will wait and receive theirs from local receivers. Health Departments will be giving vaccine. The vaccine will be offered as a voluntary vaccine, not required for school. Also, certain groups of individuals will be targeted, who may be at risk for more serious illness. At this time, according to CDC target populations are as follows:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- Health care and emergency medical services personnel
- Persons between the ages of 6 months through 24 years
- Persons from ages 25 through 64 years who are at higher risk for serious complications because of chronic health conditions or compromised immune systems.

Although there is no expected shortage of the Novel H1N1 vaccine, it may be produced and shipped in stages. The CDC recommends that the following groups receive the first batch:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age

- Health care and emergency medical services personnel
  - Children 6 months through 4 years of age
  - Children age 5 through 18 who have chronic medical conditions.
6. It is recommended that individuals with chronic health conditions and individuals age 65 and over also talk to their doctors about the vaccination against pneumonia and the seasonal flu shot. Pneumonia is usually the cause of death for individuals after battling flu, and it happens more often to people with chronic health conditions. The Hillsborough Health Department will be offering SEASONAL FLU SHOTS, NOT the H1N1, in October for adults- see clinic schedule on website. Talk to your doctor about the Pneumococcal vaccine.
  7. It is still recommended that one of the best defenses against flu, as well as other illnesses is handwashing. Also, coughing or sneezing into the elbow, when tissues are not available helps. Of course, hands must be washed or sanitized with alcohol based sanitizer after using a tissue. Please see [www.cdc.gov/Features/HandWashing/](http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HandWashing/) for information on handwashing and sanitary habits.
  8. Please continue to stay tuned by checking the Hillsborough website, cable channels 14 and 25, and/or radio 1610AM for local information.
  9. Please continue to update information by checking the CDC website: [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu) for information and guidance about the virus, special situations, and school recommendations.
  10. Schools and preschools have been updated with information from the CDC.
  11. All local Health Departments have been attending seminars given by the NJ Department of Health regarding the situation with H1N1 during the summer to determine the best strategy. The NJ website also has information pertinent to the situation at [www.nj.gov/health](http://www.nj.gov/health).
  12. It is recommended that individuals prepare for breaches in services. The Hillsborough Township website, [www.hillsborough-nj.org](http://www.hillsborough-nj.org) has pandemic preparation information, under “departments”, then “health”. Go to the preparedness section. There is also information about home health care of sick family members.

