



Public Health
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Frederick County Health Department

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Pandemic H1N1 Flu Update

9-30-2009

The following is an informational update from the Frederick County Health Officer regarding influenza-like-illness (ILI) and testing for pandemic H1N1 flu.

Influenza Like Illness (ILI):

If you become sick with flu-like illness, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine). Most people with pandemic H1N1 flu have had **mild illness and have not needed medical care or antiviral drugs and the same is true of seasonal flu**. Some people- such as children under 5, people over 65, pregnant women, and people of any age with chronic medical conditions- are at higher risk for flu complications. They should talk to a health care provider about whether they need to be examined if they get flu symptoms this season.

Symptoms of the flu include:

Fever
Coughing and/or sore throat
Runny or stuffy nose
Headache and/or body aches
Chills

Fatigue

In addition to the above symptoms, a number of people with H1N1 flu have reported:

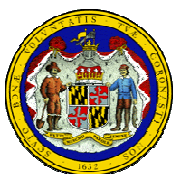
Vomiting
Diarrhea

If you do develop flu-like symptoms, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is encouraging residents to help with flu monitoring activities by going online to www.marylandfluwatch.org.

Testing for Pandemic H1N1 Flu:

If you go to your health care provider, testing **will not be done** specifically for pandemic H1N1 flu unless it is considered necessary. The CDC has changed its recommendation to reserve testing for those individuals who: 1) require hospitalization or 2) are at high-risk

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for severe disease. Testing is being used to help make treatment decisions for those at a high-risk for disease, as well as for research studies and surveillance. Some health care providers are performing a general test called the rapid flu test in the office that does NOT specifically test for pandemic H1N1 flu, but may determine if a patient has a flu virus. If the test is positive, then it is likely that the patient has the flu. Because pandemic H1N1 flu is widespread across the U.S. almost all influenza cases are now thought to be caused by the pandemic H1N1 flu virus.

However, if a patient receives a negative rapid flu test, that does not necessarily mean they do not have the flu. Therefore, if you are experiencing symptoms of influenza like illness (ILI), you should take every day protective actions as though you do have the flu to prevent spreading illness to others.

Individuals at High-Risk for Complications:

For seasonal flu, certain people are at high risk of serious complications. This includes people 65 years and older, children younger than five years old, pregnant women, and people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions. Many of these same groups are at high risk from complications from the pandemic H1N1 flu. About 70 percent of people who have been hospitalized with the H1N1 flu virus have had one or more medical conditions recognized as placing people at high risk of serious seasonal flu-related complications. This includes pregnancy, diabetes, heart disease, asthma and kidney disease.

However, one thing about the H1N1 flu virus that appears to be different from seasonal influenza is that adults older than 64 years do not yet appear to be at increased risk of pandemic H1N1-related complications thus far.

Vaccines are the best tool available for protection against the flu. For more information about seasonal flu vaccine clinics and for information on when pandemic H1N1 flu vaccine will be available, please call or visit the Health Department:

- Health Department Flu Information Line: **301-600-3035**
- Health Department Flu Website: www.frederickcountymd.gov/flu
- CDC Website: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu

Remember: taking preventive action makes a difference. This flu season, be sure to get both seasonal and pandemic H1N1 flu vaccines. Take protective measures like covering your cough and sneeze, washing your hands often, and stay home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others. Finally, keep informed and up to date by checking for the latest information about flu.