

What if YOU Get H1N1?

Adults need to put themselves first in order to help others

Since September, 2009, nearly 500 Iowans have been hospitalized with the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus. Initially, children were especially hard-hit by the virus. Surveillance now shows a growing number of adults are becoming ill with H1N1.

Adults are often more likely to make sacrifices to take care of others than they are to take care of themselves; for instance, parents may be more willing to stay home from work with a ill child than they are to stay home themselves while ill. "This year, it's more important than ever for adults to take care of themselves when they are sick," said Nicole Carritt Harrison County Home & Public Health Department. "By doing so, they not only speed along their own recovery, but also help stop the spread of illness to others."

The symptoms of H1N1 include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, chills, and fatigue. Diarrhea and vomiting have also been reported with H1N1. The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Harrison County Public Health recommend you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine. You should stay home from work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings. When at home, stay in your room and consider wearing a facemask to help prevent spreading the virus if you need to go into other parts of the home.

With Thanksgiving around the corner, it's especially important to consider the health of others when socializing or shopping. "Family gatherings are important and shopping is fun," said Carritt. "But it's much more important to keep your friends and loved ones well by staying away from others when you are ill. If you are ill, stay home from the mall; and if family is coming for Thanksgiving, try to stay in a room away from visitors."

While most adults will recover from the H1N1 virus without complications, there are signs which indicate you should seek medical attention right away. These include difficulty breathing; having purple or blue discoloration of the lips; vomiting and being unable to keep any liquids down; feeling dizzy when standing; or being unable to urinate.

Harrison County Home & Public Health continues to provide the H1N1 vaccine at weekly clinics as supply is available to those individuals in the highest priority groups for influenza-related complications. Those groups include:

- Pregnant women
- Persons who live with or provide care for infants aged <6 months (e.g. parents, siblings, and daycare providers)
- Health care and emergency medical service personnel who have direct contact with patients or infectious materials
- Persons aged 6 months – 24 years, and
- Persons aged 25 – 64 years who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications (ex. asthma, heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes, immune-compromised, receiving chemotherapy, etc)

A statewide toll-free hotline has been established for public questions about seasonal and H1N1 influenza at 1-800-447-1985. More information on the H1N1 virus and H1N1 clinics can be found by calling Harrison County Home & Public Health at (712) 644-2220 or by accessing our website at <http://www.harrisoncountyyia.org/publichealth/index.html>.