

Is it a Cold or the Flu?

Sneezing, coughing, sore throat, stuffy nose – if you are experiencing these symptoms, there's no question you feel miserable. But how do you know if you are suffering from the common cold, or influenza?

“Colds are usually milder than the flu,” said Harrison County Home and Public Health’s Nicole Carritt. “People with colds typically have symptoms from the neck up – for example, a stuffy or runny nose. Influenza, however, involves the whole body with muscle aches and pains, fever and severe fatigue.” Influenza can result in complications such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, hospitalizations and even death.

Most people have recovered from the 2009 H1N1 flu at home without needing medical care; however, it's important to monitor your symptoms and seek medical care if they worsen. In adults, these warning signs include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting (vomiting that goes on)

Warning signs in children include:

- Fast breathing or working hard to breathe
- 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 that improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash
- Being unable to eat
- Having no tears when crying

As the 2009 H1N1 virus continues to circulate in Iowa, and with seasonal influenza expected to emerge soon, it's important to continue to take personal action to stop the spread of all viruses by covering your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow, cleaning your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer, and containing germs by staying home when sick.

A statewide toll-free hotline has been established for public questions about seasonal and H1N1 influenza at 1-800-447-1985. More information can also be found at www.idph.state.ia.us. Harrison County Home and Public Health will be holding their next H1N1 clinic on Thursday, December 17th at the Harrison County Home and Public Health office, located at 116 N 2nd Ave in Logan (in the courthouse annex.) We are also offering appointments in the office for individuals who are unable to come to the December 17th clinic. To schedule a time or if you have any questions, please call 712-644-2220. We are continuing to offer seasonal flu vaccinations to all age groups. Please call the office to schedule a time.

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