

# Advice for Parents on Talking to Children About Novel H1N1 Flu (Formerly Swine Flu) Concerns

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As a parent you know how hard it can be for children to understand stressful situations, such as the current situation of novel H1N1 flu. Stressful situations often cause children to worry and have many questions as to why it is happening and how it can be fixed. It is important to remember to take care of your health and well-being as well as the health of your children. If you cope with a stressful situation well, your children will also cope better. Your confidence and calm attitude will help your children ease their worries and feel safe and secure.

## Here are some helpful tips on what you can do for your children:

- Keep activities as consistent and normal as possible even if your normal routine changes (due to daycare or school closures).
- Ask your children what they have heard about novel H1N1 flu. Answer questions openly and honestly, at a level they can understand. Be concrete and do not avoid difficult questions. (See [http://www.nasponline.org/resources/Talking\\_With\\_Children\\_About\\_Flu\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/Talking_With_Children_About_Flu_FINAL.pdf) for more information on talking tips).
- Allow your children to express their feelings and concerns. Let them know it is okay to be afraid or mad. Ask questions so you can help them identify and cope with their feelings.
- Children always need to feel safe and loved. When they are uncertain about situations and afraid they may need even more affection and attention.
- Limit exposure to media and adult conversations about novel H1N1 flu . If your children are watching T.V. try to watch with them or make sure you are available to answer questions about what they have heard.
- As appropriate, encourage healthy behaviors: eating well, sleeping well, playing outside.
- Use their questions as an opportunity to let them know what they can do to avoid getting novel H1N1 flu.

## Focus on what your child *can do* to avoid getting novel H1N1 flu:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds (long enough for children to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice). Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue. (If a tissue is used, throw the tissue away immediately).
- Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Stay at least six feet away from people who are sick.
- Stay home from school if sick, and stay away from sick people until they are better.

## Protect Yourself, Your Family, and Community

- Stay informed. Health officials will provide additional information as it becomes available. Visit the [CDC H1N1 Flu website](#).
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

- If you are sick with a flu-like illness, stay home for 7 days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. Keep away from other household members as much as possible. This is to keep you from infecting others and spreading the virus further.
- Learn more about how to take care of someone who is ill in "[Taking Care of a Sick Person in Your Home](#)"
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds, and other social distancing measures.
- If you don't have one yet, consider developing a family emergency plan as a precaution. This should include storing a supply of extra food, medicines, and other essential supplies. Further information can be found in the "[Flu Planning Checklist](#)"

.....**Clean hands protect against infection**

**Protect yourself**

Clean your hands regularly.

Wash your hands with soap and water, and dry them thoroughly.

Use alcohol-based handrub if you don't have immediate access to soap and water.

<b>Illinois Cases of H1N1 Flu</b>			
<i>(As of May 6, 2009, 10 a.m. CT)</i>			
City or County	# of Probable Cases	# of Confirmed Cases	Total
Adams	0	2	2
Chicago	9	93	102
Cook	2	57	59
DeKalb	1	1	2
DuPage	1	26	27
Kane	0	21	21
Kendall	0	2	2
Knox	-	1	1
Lake	1	4	5
McHenry	-	2	2
Sangamon	1	-	1
Will	-	15	15
Winnebago	2	2	4
Undetermined	1	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>20*</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>245</b>

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States	# of laboratory confirmed cases	Deaths
<b>(41)</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>2</b>