

THE FLU IS THE FLU

It doesn't matter what type.

There is a lot of talk about H1N1 (*formerly known as swine*) and seasonal flu, but the type of flu isn't what matters. All strains of flu can be life threatening.

Here's what you need to know.

How to prevent the flu

- ◆ Get a seasonal flu shot and H1N1 shot, if available to you
- ◆ Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- ◆ Sanitize surfaces
- ◆ Cough into your elbow or tissue
- ◆ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- ◆ Avoid contact with people who have the flu

How to treat the flu

- ◆ Stay home from work, school and public events for at least 24 hours after your fever (100° F or more) goes away without the use of a fever reducer
- ◆ Get plenty of rest
- ◆ Drink lots of fluids
- ◆ Take medications such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen for fever, headaches and body aches

How to know if you have the flu

Unlike a cold, which comes on slowly, the flu comes on fast. Symptoms of the H1N1 and seasonal flu include a fever of 100° F or more and one or more of the following symptoms:

- ◆ Cough
- ◆ Sore throat
- ◆ Runny or stuffy nose
- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Chills
- ◆ Body aches
- ◆ Fatigue

Symptoms of H1N1 in children may also include vomiting and diarrhea, which are not typical of seasonal flu.

When to seek medical attention

If you experience any of the following symptoms:

- ◆ Difficulty breathing
- ◆ Persistent vomiting
- ◆ Confusion or dizziness
- ◆ Change in skin color to bluish or gray
- ◆ Chest or abdominal pain/pressure

If your flu symptoms persist beyond 24-48 hours and you are in one of the following high-risk categories:

- ◆ Pregnant
- ◆ Have a chronic medical condition, such as heart or lung disease, asthma, diabetes, or a weakened immune system
- ◆ Under the age of 5 or over the age of 65

If you get better for a few days and then your fever and cough return, contact your doctor immediately as this could be a sign of a serious bacterial infection.

What you should know about flu shots

A seasonal flu shot protects you against the strains of flu that experts predict will be most prevalent this year. The vaccine is not 100 percent effective so you may still get the flu, but it should be a milder case. You can also get other flu strains, including H1N1, which has its own vaccine.

For more information about the flu, call SMDC's flu hotline at 218-786-3589 or visit smdc.org.

