

Fact Sheet on:

INFLUENZA A(H1N1)

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What is Influenza A(H1N1) ?

Influenza A(H1N1) is a disease that is caused by a virus that affects the respiratory system.

Can I get Influenza A(H1N1) in South Africa?

South Africa does not have an outbreak of Influenza A(H1N1), but the South African Department of Health has a National Influenza Preparedness Plan ready if there should be an outbreak.

How does Influenza A(H1N1) spread?

Influenza A(H1N1) viruses are made up of tiny particles that can be spread through the droplets that come out of your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.

When you cough or sneeze, these droplets can spread and others will be at risk of breathing them in.

If you cough or sneeze into your hand, germs are easily spread from your hand to any hard surface that you touch and they can live on those surfaces for some time.

If other people touch these surfaces and then touch their mouth, nose and eyes, the germs can enter their bodies.

Because this is a new virus, no one will have immunity to it. You are more at risk if you have traveled internationally (to countries affected by Influenza A(H1N1) or have been in contact with someone who has recently traveled internationally to affected countries or is infected with Influenza A(H1N1).

Can I get Influenza A(H1N1) from eating or preparing pork?

No. Influenza A(H1N1) viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get Influenza A(H1N1) from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products are safe.

What can I do to protect myself and others against Influenza A(H1N1)?

There is no vaccine available to protect against Influenza A(H1N1). Take everyday actions that can help protect you and others against flu.

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the bin after you use it.

Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.

Try to avoid close contact with sick people. If you get sick with flu, limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.

What are the signs and symptoms of Influenza A(H1N1) in people?

The symptoms of human Influenza A(H1N1) are similar to the symptoms of regular flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Diarrhoea and vomiting may occur. Should you experience any of those symptoms and have had contact with somebody who has recently traveled internationally to affected countries, or you have recently traveled internationally or been in contact with a person who is already infected, seek medical attention at your nearest health facility.