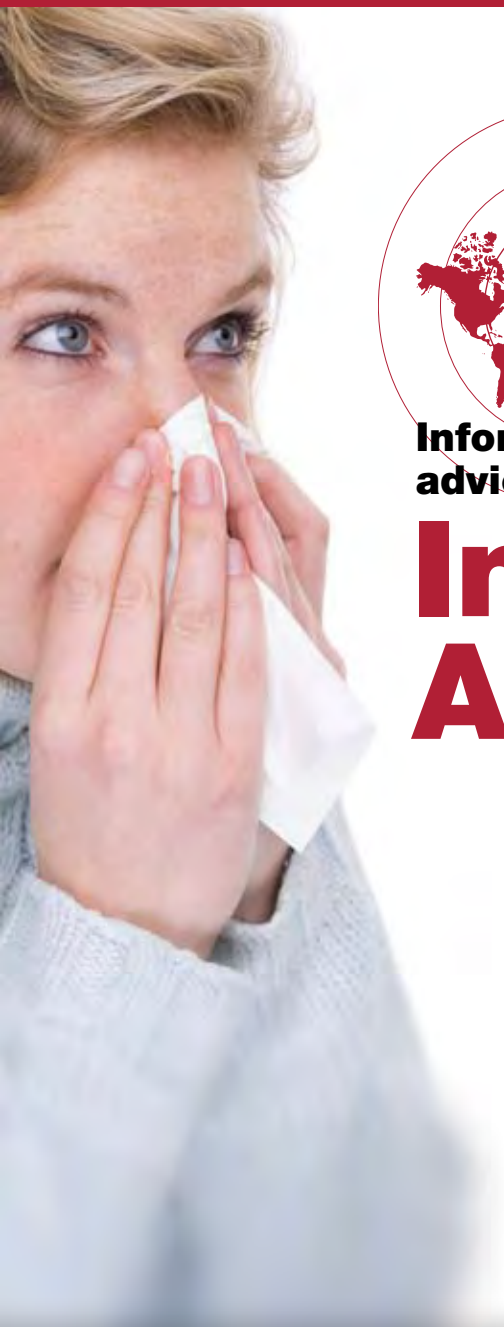


**READ THIS LEAFLET VERY CAREFULLY, AND KEEP IT IN A SAFE PLACE.  
IF THE WHO CHANGES THE PHASE OF INFLUENZA A(H1N1) FROM LEVEL  
5 TO 6 AND CASES INCREASE IN IRELAND, THIS INFORMATION WILL BE  
IMPORTANT FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.**



**Information and medical  
advice for the public on**

# **Influenza A(H1N1)**



# about

## Influenza A(H1N1)



**The World Health Organisation has said that there is now a high risk that Influenza A(H1N1) could lead to a pandemic.**

**You have an important role to play in helping to stop the flu spreading.**

There are some simple steps you can take to protect yourself, your family and friends.

### **WHAT IS INFLUENZA A(H1N1)?**

Influenza A(H1N1) is different from the ordinary or seasonal flu that occurs every winter.

- It has spread rapidly around the world
- It could be highly infectious
- It may affect large numbers of people
- It is likely to cause more severe illness than ordinary flu
- It may cause more deaths than ordinary flu
- It may occur in two or more waves several months apart – with each wave possibly lasting weeks or months

### **HOW WILL I KNOW IF I HAVE GOT INFLUENZA A(H1N1)?**

You will have the same symptoms as if you had ordinary flu but they will probably be sudden, and may be severe. They may include:

- Temperature over 38°C/100.4°F and some of the following:
  - Dry cough
  - Headache
  - Severe weakness and fatigue
  - Aching muscles and joints
  - Sore throat
  - Runny nose
  - Vomiting / diarrhoea

These can lead to complications some of which may be severe.

# preventing

## the spread of Influenza A(H1N1)



### **WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF FLU?**

If you are ill, or think you might be:

- Stay at home
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing with paper tissue if possible – the virus spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes
- Use a tissue only once and dispose of it quickly and carefully – bag and bin it
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water
- Wash hard surfaces such as kitchen worktops, door handles, etc. with a normal household cleaner as the virus can live on these surfaces
- Avoid large crowds of people whenever possible
- Make sure to tell your children and others to follow this advice

### **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I GET INFLUENZA?**

- Contact your GP or the Flu Information Line to get advice and anti-viral medicine
- Stay at home for up to 7 days or until you fully recover
- Discourage any visitors
- Take medicines such as paracetamol or ibuprofen to reduce the symptoms
- Drink plenty of fluids

Most people with flu will recover within a few days.

### **HIGHER RISK GROUPS**

Some people are at higher risk of complications from flu. They may require additional treatment or monitoring.

This group includes people with heart failure, chronic lung disease, diabetes and kidney disease or people receiving cancer treatment. It also includes children under 3 years and pregnant women.

Contact your doctor or the Flu Information Line as soon as you develop symptoms of flu.

# identifying

## Influenza A(H1N1)



### IF YOU ARE AN ADULT

If you have taken the basic care steps outlined above and you start to feel worse, or if after a few days you are not feeling better, you may need more advice from your doctor. Contact your doctor by phone or the Flu Information Line if you notice:

- Shortness of breath at rest or while doing very little
- Painful or difficult breathing
- Coughing up bloody sputum
- Drowsiness, disorientation or confusion
- Fever for 4-5 days and not starting to get better (or getting worse)
- Starting to feel better then developing high fever and feeling unwell again

### IF YOU ARE CARING FOR A CHILD

You should contact your doctor by phone or the Flu Information Line if you have taken the steps above and are still concerned that the child shows any of the following symptoms:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin colour
- 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 improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash.

# **treating**

## Influenza A(H1N1)



People who get Influenza A(H1N1) will be treated with anti-viral drugs.

Anti-viral drugs are not a cure, but they may help you to recover if taken within 48 hours of symptoms developing, by:

- Relieving some of the symptoms
- Reducing the length of time you are ill by around one day
- Reducing the potential for serious complications, such as pneumonia.

This country has a good stockpile of anti-viral drugs for patients who need them.

### **CARING FOR SOMEONE AT HOME**

Most people with flu will recover after several days by following the basic steps outlined earlier. If you are at home with flu, or taking care of someone at home, follow these important tips to stop flu spreading:

- The person who has flu should stay in one room with the door closed and if possible with the window open.
- Other family members should try not to spend too much time with the person with flu, and should avoid sharing dishes, books, toys, etc.
- Discourage visits from persons not living in the household. This is important to stop flu from spreading to other people.
- People with flu should cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing and wash their hands with soap and water immediately afterwards.
- Avoid touching the eyes with hands as this also spreads flu virus.
- Used tissues should be put by the ill person directly into a bin. Bin bags should be sealed in the room and taken directly outside by the carer for collection with regular rubbish.
- Surfaces and items inside the house should be cleaned regularly with normal household cleaners.

# **treating**

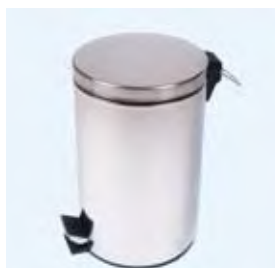
## Influenza A(H1N1)



**If you are ill,  
or think you  
might be,  
stay at home**



**Cover your  
mouth and  
nose when  
coughing  
or sneezing**



**Dispose of  
dirty tissues  
quickly and  
carefully**

**Wash your  
hands  
frequently  
with soap  
and water**



**Wash hard  
surfaces  
such as  
kitchen  
worktops**



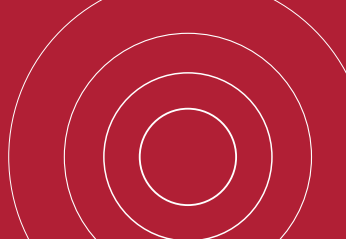
**Avoid large  
crowds of  
people**



**Tell your  
children  
and others  
to follow  
this advice**

# planning

## for Influenza A(H1N1)



### **PRACTICAL PLANS FOR YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD**

If the Influenza A(H1N1) were to become very widespread, it might have effects on day to day routines. Therefore it is a good idea to make practical plans for you, your family and your friends and neighbours.

- Think about how you would manage your childcare if schools closed, or if you get the flu and can't go to work.
- Think about making contact with neighbours who live alone, particularly older people.
- Identify a person you know, and talk to them about helping with collecting medicines, shopping for food or other essentials for you and your family if you aren't able to go out.
- In a serious flu outbreak, it makes sense to have a supply of basic necessities in the house, in case you are unwell and can't get to the shops.
- Make sure you have some simple items at home, like a thermometer and regular cold medicine like paracetamol or ibuprofen.

# further information

## Telephone

Further Information is available  
from the HSE Flu Information Line.

The Flu Information Line is available 24 hours a day and is  
your primary source of information on Influenza A(H1N1).

**Freephone 1800 94 11 00**

## Websites

The HSE's Website will be kept updated every day  
with latest information and advice. Check it often.

Health Service Executive

**[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)**

Department of Health and Children

**[www.dohc.ie](http://www.dohc.ie)**

Information for Health Professionals will be on

**[www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie)**