



Charlie Crist
Governor

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State Surgeon General

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Death of Escambia, FL resident with H1N1 virus announced

PENSACOLA, FL -- The Escambia County Health Department today announced the death of an adult male with laboratory-confirmed H1N1 virus as well as underlying medical conditions. This is the first death of an Escambia County, FL resident with a laboratory-confirmed case of H1N1.

"Our sympathies are with this individual's family and friends," said Dr. John Lanza, director of the Escambia County Health Department.

In Florida, 149 deaths have been reported in individuals with laboratory-confirmed H1N1. The health department encourages every resident to know the signs and symptoms of H1N1, emergency medical warning signs, and how to prevent the disease.

Signs & Symptoms

Common symptoms of influenza are fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, and in the case of the H1N1 virus, diarrhea and vomiting.

Treatment

Most individuals who become sick with H1N1 flu will recover by caring for themselves at home although there are individuals at higher risk (see below). Individuals who think they have influenza should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medication or if they need to seek medical care. At-home treatment includes:

- Get plenty of rest
- Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated
- Cover coughs and sneezes. Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Wear a facemask – if available and tolerable – when sharing common spaces with other household members to help prevent spreading the virus to others. This is especially important if other household members are at high risk for complications from influenza.

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Those at increased risk of complications from the H1N1 influenza include:

- Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- Adults 65 years of age and older
- Pregnant women
- People who have:
 - Cancer
 - Blood disorders (including sickle cell disease)
 - Chronic lung disease [such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)]
 - Diabetes
 - Heart disease
 - Kidney disorders
 - Liver disorders
 - Neurological disorders [such as epilepsy, cerebral palsy, brain or spinal cord injuries, moderate to profound intellectual disability (mental retardation) or developmental delay]
 - Neuromuscular disorders (such as muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis)
 - Weakened immune systems (such as people with HIV or AIDS or who are on medications that weaken the immune system)

If the types of individuals listed above develop symptoms of influenza, they should promptly contact their physician for evaluation.

Emergency medical warning signs

Emergency warning signs in children are the following and require urgent medical attention: fast breathing or trouble breathing; bluish or gray skin color; not drinking enough fluids; severe or persistent vomiting; not waking up or not interacting; being so irritable that the child does not want to be held; and, flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough. Emergency warning signs in adults are the following and require urgent medical attention: difficulty breathing or shortness of breath; pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen; sudden dizziness; confusion; severe or persistent vomiting; and, flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough.

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Prevent H1N1

While vaccination continues for most of the federally-designated priority groups, residents not in those priority groups, can take the following steps to prevent H1N1 until vaccine is available to them.

- **Wash your hands often and the right way.** Rub soapy hands together for 15 seconds (if you need a timer, imagine singing the “ABC’s” song). Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and touch the bathroom doorknob.
 - If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 - Wash your hands after using the bathroom, before and after preparing food, before and after taking care of someone who is sick, after changing diapers or cleaning up after a child who has gone to the bathroom, after handling an animal or animal waste, after touching potentially contaminated surfaces such as public door knobs, cart handles and money, and when your hands are visibly dirty.
- **Stay home if you are sick.** Keep children home if they are sick. Stay home until 24 hours after last fever without fever reducing medications. Avoid others who are sick.
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes with a disposable tissue.** If you don’t have a disposable tissue handy, cover or sneeze into the fabric on your sleeve.
- **Get your seasonal flu vaccination.** As long as there is seasonal flu vaccine available, it is strongly recommended that individuals get their seasonal flu shot as well as the “pneumonia shot” for individuals with chronic disease and individuals 65 years and above.

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