

Monterey County Health Department Preparedness Minute

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2009 H1N1 Influenza Virus And Your Work Place

It is not known whether the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus will cause more illness or more severe illness in the coming months, but the Monterey County Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommend that everyone be prepared for influenza.



Both seasonal and 2009 H1N1 influenza pose serious health threats, employers should work with employees to develop and implement plans that can reduce the spread of flu, and to encourage seasonal flu vaccination as well as H1N1 vaccination when that vaccine becomes available.

How can I stay healthy at work?

- ✦ **Wash your hands frequently** with soap and water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner if soap and water are not available.



- ✦ **Avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes.**
- ✦ **Cough and sneeze into your elbow**
- ✦ **Keep frequently touched common surfaces clean**, such as telephones, computer keyboards, doorknobs, etc.
- ✦ **Do not use other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment.** If you need to use a co-worker's phone, desk, or other equipment, clean it first.

- ✦ **Don't spread the flu! If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home.** Symptoms of flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit) or chills **and** cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting. The CDC recommends that sick workers stay home if they are sick with flu-like illness until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines.



- ✦ **Get vaccinated against seasonal flu.**
- ✦ **Maintain a healthy lifestyle** through rest, diet, exercise, & relaxation.



Avoid worrying about your paycheck—Get direct deposit— In the event of a pandemic staffing shortages may affect payroll but by having your check directly deposited you can avoid the worry about your paycheck.

The purpose of this short publication is to inform Monterey County staff about preparedness issues ranging from emerging communicable diseases to personal preparedness. If there is a specific topic you or your staff are interested in please contact the Preparedness Program at klahnk@co.monterey.ca.us.



How do I know if someone has 2009 H1N1 flu or seasonal flu?

It will be very hard to tell if someone who is sick has 2009 H1N1 flu or seasonal flu. Public health officials are not recommending laboratory tests. **Anyone who has the symptoms of flu-like illness should stay home and not go to work.**

The symptoms of influenza are:

- ◇ Fever- low (99°) to high (104°), usually for 3 days, but may persist for 4 to 8 days.
- ◇ Aching muscles
- ◇ Cough
- ◇ Headache
- ◇ Joint aches
- ◇ Eye pain
- ◇ Feeling very cold or having shaking chills
- ◇ Feeling very tired
- ◇ Sore throat, runny or stuffy nose



When can an individual return to work?

An individual may return to work or school when your fever has been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of anti-fever medications like Tylenol

Healthcare workers with direct patient contact should stay home for seven days from the time symptoms began or until they are fever-free for at least 24 hours, whichever is longer.

When to seek additional medical advice

- ◆ If the person is short of breath or breathing rapidly at rest
- ◆ If the person's skin is dusky or bluish in color
- ◆ If the person is disoriented ("out of it")
- ◆ If the person is so dizzy or weak that standing is difficult (in a person who was able to walk before the illness)
- ◆ If the person has not urinated in 12 or more hours

A H1N1 Want to know more?

Centers for Disease Control—www.cdc.gov/H1N1Flu

US Department of Health and Human Services— www.flu.gov

California Department of Public Health—<http://www.cdph.ca.gov>

Monterey County Health Department—www.co.monterey.ca.us/health

This issue of *Preparedness Minute* is brought to you by the Monterey County Health Department's Preparedness Program. For more information Contact:

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