

FAQ

What is novel strain H1N1 influenza?

Flu is caused by a germ called the influenza virus. Each year, several different strains of influenza virus circulate around the world. The flu vaccine we use each year contains the three strains of the virus that are most common that year. Unexpectedly, at the end of the flu season this past spring, a new type (novel strain) of the virus, H1N1, began to circulate around the world. Because it is a new strain, a new vaccine has been developed to protect against H1N1 influenza virus and will be available in late fall.

Is H1N1 influenza any different than other strains of influenza virus?

In the US, about 40,000 people die each year from the seasonal flu, particularly those at risk of flu complications. This virus appears to be similar to seasonal flu at this time.

How will I know if I have been infected by H1N1 influenza?

H1N1 influenza is circulating widely in Texas as of Sep 2009. Symptoms of this flu include fever (temperature of 100°F [37.8°C] or more) and a **cough** and/or a **sore throat**. Currently, if you have a fever and cough and/or sore throat, it is most likely due to this new virus. As the flu season begins this fall, we expect to see other strains of influenza begin to circulate along with the H1N1.

What other symptoms are associated with H1N1 influenza?

People with H1N1 influenza commonly report runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some have also reported diarrhea and vomiting.

How is it spread?

Flu viruses are commonly spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing. People may also become infected by touching something with flu virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose. The virus can survive for up to 2-8 hrs on most surfaces.

What should I do right now?

Follow the same actions to prevent any flu—healthy lifestyle practices, get your seasonal flu shot, get the H1N1 shot based on medical recommendations and Air Force policy, and avoid the germs and viruses spread by people who are sick with the flu.