



# Cochise County Health Department

Vaira Harik, Director

"Building A Healthier Future"

## Novel H1N1 Basics: What you Need to Know

As of 9/3/09

Human infections with the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus were first identified in April 2009, and infections with this virus have been reported worldwide.

In presentation the virus is much like a bad case of the seasonal flu—fever, coughing, sneezing, congestion, fatigue, body aches. Most people recover from the illness after it has run its course, without medical treatment.

So why is the public health system reacting so strongly to this virus? Because it is "novel"; the majority of people worldwide do not have immunity to it. It could change over time and become more deadly. This has happened in the past with other viral outbreaks. By preparing now, we hope to reduce people's susceptibility to the virus in the future.

### What You Need to Know:

1. **Seasonal flu and H1N1 are two different illnesses** and the vaccinations for each will be separate. Seasonal flu shots will soon be available to all county employees through our health plan. All are recommended to get a seasonal flu shot as soon as possible.
2. **H1N1 vaccine is not available yet**. It is expected to be available in early November. **When it arrives there will not be enough to vaccinate everyone in the county.**
3. **Only certain people will be receiving the H1N1 vaccination at first** (see A. below). If you or your family members do not fall into one of the priority categories you will not be vaccinated until we (meaning the Health Department as well as other vaccinators in the community) have finished vaccinating the priority categories. **We are planning the H1N1 vaccination clinics now, and more information will be coming soon.**
4. Therefore, **basic hygienic practices (see B. below) are essential** to prevent the spread of all flu viruses in your offices and amongst your staff.
5. **If you or a family member have flu-like symptoms and are running a fever you should not go to work or school** until 24 hours after the fever has passed. Children that are sent to school in that condition will be sent home.
6. **It is important to plan now** for how you will deal with yourself or your children not being able to go to work or school. Can you arrange to work from home? Talk to your boss about this now. If you're the boss, start planning for how you will deal with significant absences due to illness amongst your employees.

**If you're a parent and your child's caregivers all work during the day, how will you deal with a sick child that cannot be at school?** Make arrangements for childcare now. And have a back up plan in case the babysitter is sick too.

Your County Questions Answered: [www.cochisecounty.com](http://www.cochisecounty.com)

Email: [health@cochise.az.gov](mailto:health@cochise.az.gov)

**Main:** 1415 Melody Lane, Bldg. A, Bisbee, AZ 85603  
**Benson:** 126 W. 5th Street, Benson, AZ 85602  
**Douglas:** 515 7th Street, Douglas, AZ 85607  
**Sierra Vista:** 4115 E. Foothills Drive, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635  
**Willcox:** 450 S. Haskell Avenue, Willcox, AZ 85643

Phone: 520-432-9400  
 Phone: 520-586-8200  
 Phone: 520-364-5600  
 Phone: 520-803-3900  
 Phone: 520-384-7100

Fax: 520-432-9480  
 Fax: 520-586-2051  
 Fax: 520-364-5453  
 Fax: 520-459-8195  
 Fax: 520-384-0309



# Cochise County Health Department

Vaira Harik, Director

"Building A Healthier Future"

## Preventing the Spread of Novel H1N1

### A. Vaccination:

Studies suggest that a large majority of the population is susceptible to novel influenza A (H1N1) virus. Persons over the age of 65 are much less susceptible to novel H1N1 than are young people aged 5-24 years old.

The US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has recommended that the following groups receive the vaccine first if vaccine is initially scarce (the order does not indicate priority):

- Pregnant women,
- Children aged 6 months to 4 years,
- Persons who live with or provide care for infants aged <6 months (e.g., parents, siblings, and daycare providers),
- Health-care and emergency medical services personnel who have direct contact with patients or infectious material,
- Children and adolescents aged 5 to 18 years that have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications (e.g. asthma, diabetes, heart or lung conditions, suppressed immune system).

As vaccine supplies increase, prioritized vaccinations should expand to include the following groups (the order does not indicate priority):

- All health-care and emergency medical services personnel,
- All persons aged 6 months to 24 years, and
- Persons aged 25 to 64 years who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications (e.g. diabetes, heart disease, asthma, and kidney disease).

Eventually there will be enough vaccine available for everyone, but we probably won't be at that point for several months.

### B. Prevention:

**The best defense against novel H1N1 is to avoid becoming infected in the first place.**

Maintaining excellent personal hygiene amongst adults and children is extremely important for the prevention of infection.

### Take these everyday steps to protect your health and the health of those around you:

- **Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze—but not with your hands!** Use a tissue and throw it in the trash after one use. If you don't have a tissue use your sleeve.
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

Your County Questions Answered: [www.cochisecounty.com](http://www.cochisecounty.com)

Email: [health@cochise.az.gov](mailto:health@cochise.az.gov)

**Main:** 1415 Melody Lane, Bldg. A, Bisbee, AZ 85603  
**Benson:** 126 W. 5th Street, Benson, AZ 85602  
**Douglas:** 515 7th Street, Douglas, AZ 85607  
**Sierra Vista:** 4115 E. Foothills Drive, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635  
**Willcox:** 450 S. Haskell Avenue, Willcox, AZ 85643

Phone: 520-432-9400  
 Phone: 520-586-8200  
 Phone: 520-364-5600  
 Phone: 520-803-3900  
 Phone: 520-384-7100

Fax: 520-432-9480  
 Fax: 520-586-2051  
 Fax: 520-364-5453  
 Fax: 520-459-8195  
 Fax: 520-384-0309



# Cochise County Health Department

Vaira Harik, Director

"Building A Healthier Future"

- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Your mother was right: germs spread this way.
- Try to **avoid close contact with sick people.**
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you **stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone** except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.
- **Do not send your children to school if they are sick,** particularly if they have a fever.

Source: [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu)

**An uncovered sneeze can project droplets up to 6 feet at up to 100 miles per hour.**

**COVER IT!**



**Questions? Email [yharik@cochise.az.gov](mailto:yharik@cochise.az.gov)**

*Your County Questions Answered: [www.cochisecounty.com](http://www.cochisecounty.com)*

*Email: [health@cochise.az.gov](mailto:health@cochise.az.gov)*

**Main:** 1415 Melody Lane, Bldg. A, Bisbee, AZ 85603  
**Benson:** 126 W. 5th Street, Benson, AZ 85602  
**Douglas:** 515 7th Street, Douglas, AZ 85607  
**Sierra Vista:** 4115 E. Foothills Drive, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635  
**Willcox:** 450 S. Haskell Avenue, Willcox, AZ 85643

Phone: 520-432-9400  
 Phone: 520-586-8200  
 Phone: 520-364-5600  
 Phone: 520-803-3900  
 Phone: 520-384-7100

Fax: 520-432-9480  
 Fax: 520-586-2051  
 Fax: 520-364-5453  
 Fax: 520-459-8195  
 Fax: 520-384-0309