



P R E S S R E L E A S E

News Media Contact:

Susan Klein-Rothschild
Public Information Officer
(805) 681-5435
(805) 896-1057 (cell)
sklein@sbcphd.org

September 23, 2009
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Do you need to get a lab test for H1N1?

The answer is no. The Centers for Disease Control has advised testing for patients who are hospitalized or who have died and influenza is suspected to be the cause. The Public Health Department will be testing as advised by the Centers for Disease Control. Most people who become sick with flu will recover at home with comfort measures such as over-the-counter medications, rest, liquids and healthy foods. Testing for H1N1 flu is not necessary to diagnose and treat a person with flu.

People are considered to have the flu, including H1N1 flu, when they have sudden onset of illness with a fever over 100° and they have at least one of the symptoms below:

- body aches
- cough
- sore throat
- congestion
- vomiting/diarrhea

Many of these flu symptoms are easily confused with symptoms of the common cold but with flu the symptoms are usually more severe and the cough is more prominent. With colds, people are still mostly able to go about their daily activities; with influenza, people are often too sick to perform their usual activities.

If you are in one of the high risk groups below, consult with your health care provider early if you experience symptoms of the flu. People in these groups are considered at higher risk for serious illness and complications.

- Pregnant women
- Children 0 – 5 years of age
- Individuals of all ages with chronic medical conditions
 - Pulmonary asthma, cystic fibrosis, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
 - Immune compromised
 - Medically fragile

For most people, prevention is the best strategy. The Public Health Department encourages everyone to follow six steps to decrease the spread of H1N1 Flu and lessen their chance of becoming ill.

- Get the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine when it is available for you based on your age and medical condition
- Wash your hands frequently or using alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Sneeze or cough into your upper arm or sleeve to avoid contaminating your hands
- Stay home when you are ill to avoid spreading illness to others
- Avoid contact with others who are ill

For more information, see the Public Health Department's website www.sbcfluinfo.org. For additional questions, contact your health care provider or call the H1N1 Information Line toll-free at 1-888-722-6358.