

NH Department of Health and Human Services  
129 Pleasant Street – Hugh Gallen State Office Park  
Concord, NH 03301



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT**  
**Public Information Office**  
**603-271-4051**

## **DHHS Offers Guidance on Public Gatherings and H1N1 Flu**

**Concord, NH** – The H1N1 (swine flu) virus is transmitted mainly through coughing and sneezing through the spread of respiratory droplets. Therefore, while the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is not advising people against going about their regular business, it is advising people to take some common sense precautions when going out in public during this outbreak.

H1N1 (and any flu) can be spread from one person to another when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are sprayed through the air and land on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Influenza viruses may also be spread when a person touches cough or sneeze droplets on another person or object and then touches their own mouth or nose (or someone else's) before washing their hands.

“While this type of new virus can make people very uneasy,” said Dr. José Montero, the State's Public Health Director, “there are steps we should all be taking, not just during this event but always, that can help reduce the number of people becoming ill.”

Routine actions are an important way of keeping yourself healthy; these include:

- Wash your hands frequently (15-20 seconds with soap and warm water) or use 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizing gels
- Always cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and always throw away used tissues into the trash, or cough into your elbow/shoulder
- If you have not washed your hands, avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Do not share drinking/eating containers or utensils
- Avoid contact with ill persons if possible
- Monitor your own health

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- If you do become ill, stay home from work and school
- Keep surfaces at home and work clean (such as keyboards, door knobs, computer mice, telephones, light switches, faucets) by wiping them down with a disinfectant according to directions on the product label.

Whenever possible, rather than relying on the use of facemasks, avoid close contact and crowded conditions. A facemask will not give complete protection from H1N1 influenza, but may help to control the spread from person to person if you are sick. It is recommended that if you go to a healthcare provider with possible flu symptoms, you should wear a mask. Consider wearing a facemask in public if you live with someone who has been told by a doctor they have H1N1. Limit the time you spend in public places while that person is ill.

The symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to seasonal influenza, including fever, sore throat, cough, stuffy nose, chills, headache and muscle aches, and fatigue. Some patients have also reported diarrhea and vomiting and severe illness, including pneumonia, and sometimes death occurs.

H1N1 flu cases have been confirmed in 36 states so far and more cases are expected. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said there have been 279 cases. A toddler from Mexico died in Texas last week, marking the only known U.S. death from the virus.

For questions about H1N1, possible symptoms, travel information, or other issues related to this illness residents can call 1-888-330-6764 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. daily. For more information on H1N1, visit [www.dhhs.nh.gov](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov) or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at [www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu).

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