



CDSS

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COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING DIVISION (CCLD): TIPS FOR LICENSEES ON H1N1 (SWINE) AND SEASONAL INFLUENZA (12/2/09)

What are the symptoms of the H1N1 (Swine) flu and the seasonal flu?

According to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the symptoms of the H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of the seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting associated with the H1N1 flu.

What is the importance of vaccination?

Vaccination is the most important prevention measure. CDPH recommends that all clients and staff be vaccinated against the seasonal flu. Watch for information on H1N1 vaccinations and see CDPH's H1N1 Vaccination Locations page at www.cdph.ca.gov, or call the CDPH H1N1 flu hotline at 1-888-865-0564 or your [local health department](#).

What are some general prevention tips?

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Throw the used tissue away afterward. Remember: one sneeze, one tissue.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with people who have a flu-like illness.
- If you have the flu, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that you stay home until you have been fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. A temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees Celsius) is a fever.

How is influenza introduced into facilities, and what can be done to prevent it?

CDPH advises that influenza infections in clients of residential care facilities usually occur as the result of client contact with infected staff or visitors. To prevent infection, licensees are advised that:

- Staff should not come to work while they are ill (see above).
- All staff and clients should be vaccinated (see above).
- Visitors should not enter the facility while they are ill.
- Staff/visitors/clients should practice good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette.

What other steps should licensees take?

- **Disaster plan.** Make sure the facility's emergency disaster plan covers pandemic influenza.
- **Promote good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette:**
 - **Posters/signs.** Consider posting signs that request clients and visitors to inform facility staff if they have symptoms of a respiratory infection, and that discourage ill persons from visiting the facility. Also consider posting signs such as CDC's Cover Your Cough. Please see <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm> for links to signs and brochures.

- **Tissues/face masks.** Provide tissues or facemasks, such as procedure masks (have ear loops) or surgical masks (have ties), to clients and facility visitors who are coughing or sneezing so that they can cover their nose and mouth.
 - **Wastebaskets.** Provide wastebaskets or no-touch receptacles for disposing of used tissues.
 - **Handwashing.** Encourage frequent handwashing, and provide handwashing supplies where sinks are located (soap may be either plain or antimicrobial). Provide dispensers of alcohol-based hand cleaners in other locations.
 - **Keep distance.** Encourage coughing persons to sit at least three feet away from others, if tolerated. (*Sick persons should stay at least six feet away from others.*)
- **Monitor clients and staff for illness.** If a client is in a risk group for flu complications (e.g., over 65 years; chronic respiratory disorders), seek medical care early (e.g., for information about antiviral medications). CDC recommends that ill children 18 years and under not be given aspirin or aspirin-containing products due to the risk of Reye syndrome. See www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/recommendations.htm.
 - **Common areas.** Discourage clients with respiratory symptoms from using common areas when feasible. Any client with an acute respiratory infection should be encouraged to *not* participate in group activities and to stay six feet away from other clients.
 - **Keep surfaces clean.** Keep countertops, and other frequently touched surfaces such as door handles and light switches, clean at all times. Any disinfectant registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) *that is used according to the manufacturer's directions* will be effective at eliminating the flu virus (e.g., Pine-Sol, Mr. Clean, or other household cleaners that say “disinfectant” on the label). A bleach-to-water solution of between 1:100 and 1:10 may also be used.
 - **Other household tips.** Don't share linens, eating utensils and dishes belonging to ill persons without washing thoroughly first. Wash linens with household laundry soap and tumble dry on a hot setting. Wash eating utensils and dishes in a dishwasher or by hand with soap and water.

What precautions should facility staff take when caring for a sick client?

- Encourage staff to wear gloves when caring for an ill client.
- Encourage staff to wear a gown if soiling of clothes with a client's respiratory secretions is anticipated.
- Encourage staff to change gloves and gowns after each client encounter and wash hands.
- Encourage staff to wash or sanitize their hands before/after touching an ill client, after touching a client's environment, or after touching a client's respiratory secretions, whether or not gloves are worn.
- Encourage staff who have close physical contact with ill clients (e.g., bathing, feeding, room cleaning) to wear a facemask or respirator (see <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/masks.htm>).
- If client movement or transport is necessary, encourage the client to wear a facemask (if possible).

What additional steps should a licensee take when an outbreak of influenza is suspected?

For CCLD-licensed facilities, an outbreak or suspected outbreak of H1N1 or seasonal influenza is considered to be two or more clients in a facility, or an area of the facility, developing an acute respiratory illness with fever during a one-week period. (See also www.cclld.ca.gov/res/pdf/CDPHflu.pdf.) *In the case of an outbreak or suspected outbreak, licensees are required to notify the local licensing office and the [local health department](#).* It is also recommended that licensees:

- In residential facilities, request clients with symptoms to remain in their rooms or apartments until their symptoms have resolved. If that's not possible, request that clients wash their hands and put on a facemask (if possible) before leaving their room, or if others must enter their room.
- Again, request ill staff members to remain at home until their symptoms have subsided.
- Limit all visitors (especially if they have symptoms) and group social activities.

See also www.cclld.ca.gov, www.cdph.ca.gov, www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/, and www.flu.gov/.