



H1N1 and the Seasonal Flu in Asthma Patients

With the cool weather rapidly approaching, it is time to start thinking about the cold and flu season. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that people with asthma or other chronic health conditions are at a higher risk for flu related complications.¹ And at the beginning of the H1N1 outbreak earlier this year, the CDC reported that 32% of the hospitalized flu patients had a history of asthma.¹

You may be wondering how you can protect yourself from the flu and the H1N1 virus. The Illinois Department of Public Health has outlined some important ways to prevent both the seasonal flu and H1N1.³

*Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and water or alcohol based hand sanitizer.

*Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs can enter the body through these areas.

*If possible, try to stay away from people who are sick.

*Get plenty of rest, eat well, and stay hydrated.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services also recommends flu shots for adults and children 6 months and older who have asthma.² This agency also recommends that children with asthma do not take the "inhaled FluMist®" vaccine.² Check with your doctor to see if a flu shot or H1N1 vaccine is appropriate for you and your children.²

If you do become ill with flu-like symptoms, you may want to check with your doctor to see if further treatment or testing is needed.³ You should also watch for the following emergency warning signs³:

*Trouble breathing or chest pain

*rapid breathing

*dizziness, confusion, or loss of consciousness

* Persistent or severe vomiting

*excessive irritability or fever with rash in children

*blue or grayish skin tone

If you notice any of these signs and symptoms, seek medical help immediately.³ Watch for warning signs of the flu and practice good hand hygiene. Stay healthy this flu season!

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¹<http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1FLU/surveillanceqa.htm>

² <http://www.flu.gov/individualfamily/healthconditions/index.html#asthma>

³http://www.idph.state.il.us/h1n1_flu/sf_qa.htm

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