



H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu) Emergency and Precautions

FutureScripts is currently monitoring the Public Health Emergency caused by H1N1 influenza infection. We are working with our clients to ensure proper communication and timely information. It is important to note that the current situation is not a cause for alarm but it is a cause for concern. Attached are FAQs regarding H1N1 Influenza and common ways to prevent infection put forth by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control).

H1N1 Influenza (commonly referred to as Swine flu) is a contagious acute respiratory disease. It is commonly found in pigs and is caused by a mixture of type A influenza viruses. People do not normally get this type of influenza, but human infections can and do happen. The symptoms of H1N1 influenza in people are similar to the symptoms of the regular flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some cases have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

The strain of the influenza virus is thought to spread in the same way as other respiratory conditions (including seasonal flu). Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with the flu. Sometimes, people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

Flu viruses are treated with antiviral medications. These drugs include Tamiflu (oseltamavir) and Relenza (zanamivir). Tamiflu is available on the preferred tier status. Both are available without any Prior Authorization. Quantity Level limits are in place to limit unnecessary over utilization. Due to the nature of this public health emergency and the limited resources, these antiviral drugs should not be used for prophylaxis except for those people directly exposed to the H1N1 flu virus or exposed to suspected cases of H1N1 infection.

There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like the swine flu. The attached FAQs from the CDC address these specific actions.

Please refer to the CDC website for further information, as it is continuously updated. If you have any questions, please contact Diane Karpets, PharmD at 215-640-7908.

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control (<http://www.cdc.gov/>)
2. Food and Drug Administration (<http://fda.gov/>)
3. "Health Alert. Swine Flu: Public Health Update and Recommendation for Screening."
Philadelphia Department of Public Health: Division of Disease Control. April 26, 2009.
4. Health and Human Services (<http://www.hhs.gov/>)
5. World Health Organization (<http://www.who.int/en/>)