

Weekly Wellness Tip

H1N1 (Swine) Flu: Disinfecting Your Home

Washing your hands and keeping surfaces in your home clean and disinfected can help prevent the spread of illness and keep you and your family well. Germs are most often spread when a sick person coughs or sneezes. Droplets from an infected family member can move through the air and land on surfaces in the home. The virus is thought to be able to live on surfaces for up to 2 to 8 hours. If you touch the surface within that time frame, then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth before washing your hands, you could get sick.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends washing your hands with soap and water, or using hand sanitizer, immediately after touching surfaces that may have been exposed to the virus. In addition, keep the following tips in mind in order to prevent the spread of H1N1 (swine) flu:

- **Keep surfaces clean.** Pay special attention to bedside tables, bathroom and kitchen surfaces, toys, phones, computer keyboards, and doorknobs. Wipe them down with a household disinfectant. Follow the directions on the product label. Chlorine bleach, hydrogen peroxide, detergents, soaps, antiseptics, and alcohol are all effective against human influenza viruses if used properly.
- **Keep trash cans handy.** To prevent the spread of virus, throw away tissues and other disposable items (such as paper cups or plates) right away. Keep trash cans available throughout your home. Always wash your hands after you touch a used tissue or empty the garbage.
- **Keep linens clean.** Don't share bed sheets or towels if anyone in your home is sick. You don't have to wash linens separately, though. Just use your usual household laundry soap and tumble dry on a hot setting. Avoid "hugging" dirty laundry as you collect it and put it in the washer. Wash your hands right away after handling dirty laundry. Consider using paper towels to dry your hands after washing. Or, give each member of your household a separate towel (label towels or choose a unique color for each person).
- **Clean dishes and utensils.** Don't share dishes or eating utensils before they are washed. These items can be washed in the dishwasher or by hand with dish soap and water. If you use paper plates or cups, throw them away after a single use.
- **Keep your home well ventilated.** If weather permits, open windows in bathrooms, bedrooms and kitchen.

Source: UnitedHealthcare

H1N1 (Swine) Flu Portal

Go to teamhealth.com/wellness/fluinformation for more information about H1N1 (swine) flu and resources that are available to you.