

GET READY

Emerging Infectious Diseases

What Are They?

Emerging infectious diseases include diseases that have surfaced for the first time in recent years and those we thought we had conquered, but have returned with new complications. Emerging infectious diseases also include diseases that can be used as weapons for bioterrorism purposes.

Emerging infectious diseases vary greatly in their ability to cause serious illness and death. Some also spread more easily from person to person than others.

And we've seen several pop up in the last few years, ranging from mumps to West Nile virus to severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

But, you can take steps to protect yourself, your family and your community from these diseases every day.

In the Spotlight: Mumps



The Comeback: Starting in Iowa in December 2005, outbreaks of mumps—spread very much like the cold—surfaced in many states.

Symptoms: First symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, muscle aches and loss of appetite. Then, glands become swollen. The most common swelling with mumps are the glands that are in your cheek, near your jaw line and below your ears (See picture).

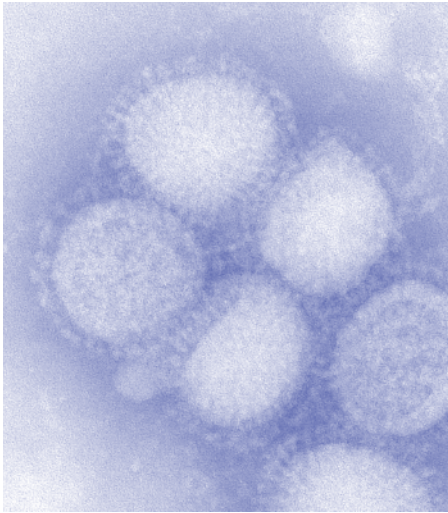
Treatment: There is no specific treatment for mumps. However, its symptoms can be treated. Consult a health care professional if you experience complications.

How to protect yourself: Make sure that you've received the mumps vaccine, part of the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine, in your lifetime.



In the Spotlight: H1N1 "Swine Flu" Virus

What Is It? H1N1 flu is a respiratory disease that is normally found in pigs, but can be caught by people too. Symptoms include the same things you might experience with the flu you get in the winter: fever, cough, fatigue, headache, chills, body aches, sore throat, diarrhea and vomiting. It is possible that very severe cases of H1N1 flu can lead to pneumonia and death, especially in people who are in poor health.



How Do You Prevent It?

There are very simple ways to protect yourself from H1N1 flu:

- Wash your hands frequently, especially when you are in public places.
- Stay at least three feet away from anyone who is coughing or sneezing. If someone around you does appear sick, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth and surfaces the sick person touches, until you have a chance to wash your hands.
- If you start to feel sick, stay home from work and don't go to public places. Then call your health-care provider right away to find out if you are at risk for H1N1 flu infection.
- If you are living with someone who is experiencing the same symptoms as H1N1 flu, it's important to protect yourself. Until you know for sure whether the person has H1N1 flu, care for yourself by wearing a mask or a protective cloth over your mouth and nose. Wash your hands frequently and don't share dishes, towels or bed sheets with the sick person. As soon as possible, take the sick person to the doctor to find out if either of you is at risk for H1N1 flu.

What To Do If You Get It?

If you start to feel even some of the symptoms of H1N1—fever, cough, fatigue, headache, chills, body aches, sore throat, diarrhea and vomiting—stay home from work or school and out of public places. Limit contact with other people in your home to avoid getting them sick. Make sure to cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze and throw tissues directly into a garbage can and not on other surfaces where the virus can stay. Contact your healthcare provider right away to find out if you are at risk of infection for H1N1 flu. Two antiviral medications, Tamiflu and Relenza, are effective in reducing the severity of flu symptoms.

The Centers of Disease Control (CDC) recommends that you go immediately to your doctor or local emergency room if you or your children experience any of the following serious symptoms:

In children:

- Trouble breathing (for example, fast breathing or gasping for air)

- Bluish skin color
- Not wanting to drink fluids
- Not waking up or being unusually tired
- A child not wanting to be held or touched
- Flu-like symptoms that get better, but then come back with fever and severe cough
- Any fever with a rash

In adults:

- Trouble breathing (for example, fast breathing or gasping for air)
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or non-stop vomiting

Above all, do not panic. Staying calm, taking the preventive steps listed above, and seeking treatment as soon as possible if you feel sick, are the keys to protecting yourself and your loved ones from H1N1 flu.

For more information, go to www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu



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