



your family's health

The 2009 H1N1 flu

What you need to know

People around the world have recently gotten a new type of flu called the 2009 H1N1 flu. (It used to be called swine flu.) You might wonder if you are at risk and how you can protect your health.

Here are answers from health officials to some of the most common questions about the disease:

Q. What is the 2009 H1N1 flu?

A. This is a new type of flu that affects the lungs of people. It was once known as swine flu because scientists thought it was the same type of flu that can affect pigs in North America. But now they know it's not.

Q. How does it spread?

A. Right now the 2009 H1N1 flu seems to spread like regular flu: through the coughs and sneezes of people who have it.

Q. What are the signs?

A. If you have the 2009 H1N1 flu, you may: » Have a fever. » Have a cough. » Have a runny or stuffy nose. » Have a sore throat. » Feel sick to your stomach or vomit. » Have diarrhea.

Q. Can you get it from eating food?

A. No. It is not spread by food, and you can't become infected by eating pork or pork products.

Q. How can I protect myself?

A. Get vaccinated against 2009 H1N1. Also, wash your hands often in soap and water. If you don't have soap and water, use hand wipes or cleansing gel.

In addition:

- Get plenty of sleep and exercise.
- Drink lots of fluids, and eat healthy foods.
- Try not to touch your mouth, nose or eyes. If you must do that, wash your hands first.
- Try not to be around sick people.

Since the 2009 H1N1 vaccine doesn't protect against seasonal

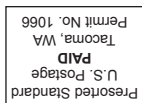


flu, you also should get the regular flu vaccine. You should not get vaccinated against either the 2009 H1N1 flu or the seasonal flu if you're allergic to chicken eggs.

Q. Can it be treated?

A. Yes. Two prescription medicines may help treat the 2009 H1N1 flu. If you get sick, the medicines can make the illness milder. They can

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Understanding medical language

Improving your health is as easy as “Ask Me 3”

You may not be able to change the way your health care provider (HCP) talks. But you can take steps to help you get the answers you need:

Don't be shy—ask questions.

Make a list of questions to bring with you to your HCP so you don't forget to ask them. The Partnership for Clear Health Communication at the National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF) suggests using its “Ask Me 3” program. “Ask Me 3” suggests three simple but important questions people can ask their HCPs:

- What is my main problem?
- What do I need to do?
- Why is it important for me to do this?

Bring a family member or friend. This person may be able to help you take notes and hear the HCP's instructions in case you miss something.

Speak up. Tell your HCP if you do not understand the information being given to you. Ask to have instructions repeated until you know what you need to do. Your health care team is there to help you and expects you to ask questions if you do not understand.

Repeat instructions. After



your HCP gives you instructions, repeat them back. This will help him or her understand what you have heard and allow them to clarify anything that needs further explanation. Make sure you have the information right.

Ask for more information. If your HCP says you have a health problem, ask where you can go for additional information after your visit, such as a website, a hotline number or written materials. The more you know, the more you can help yourself.

Missouri Care Health Plan is awarded new contract

We are pleased to announce that Missouri Care Health Plan has been awarded a new contract with the state of Missouri, MO HealthNet Division. For the past 11 years, Missouri Care has provided health care coverage in the Central Region for MO HealthNet managed care programs.

Effective October 1, 2009, Missouri Care will offer coverage in the Western Region (including Kansas City) and Eastern Region (including St. Louis).

Currently, Missouri Care has a network of more than 3,600 providers and 27 hospitals in the Central Region. The expanded network includes more than 2,620 providers, 23 hospitals and 53 clinics, which include safety-net providers, such as Federally Qualified Rural Health Centers.

To learn more about the expansion of Missouri Care Health Plan or to find out what counties are included in the expansion, please visit our website at www.missouricare.com or call Member Services at 800-322-6027.

Important Missouri Care Phone Numbers

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|---|--------------|
| Member Services | 800-322-6027 |
| MTM Transportation | 800-695-5791 |
| Informed Health Line (24-hour nurse advice line) | 800-556-1555 |
| Behavioral Health | 800-889-4073 |

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Missouri CareSM
HEALTH PLAN

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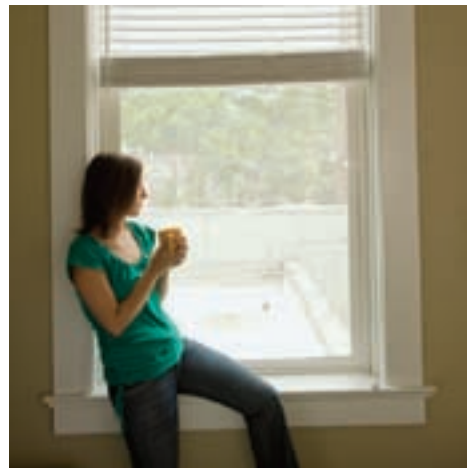
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Depression: More than just the ‘blues’

Life has many ups and downs. And sometimes those “downs” can be life-changing events that can, at the very least, make us feel incredibly sad or discouraged.

Many times those feelings, while intense, may not last for very long.

But when sadness or despair are constant companions, it might be more than a fleeting case of the blues—it might be depression.



Symptoms of depression

With depression, you might feel sad, anxious or “empty” most of the time and no longer enjoy things the way you used to. Other signs may include: » Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism. » Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness. » Loss of energy or feeling fatigued. » Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions. » Sleeping too little or too much. » Changes in appetite or weight.

- » Feeling restless or irritable.
- » Having thoughts of death or suicide

Finding your way back

Many people don’t seek help for depression, but the majority of people who do seek help get better with the right treatment, reports the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

Common treatments include antidepressant medicines and

“talk” therapy. You may need to take antidepressant medicines for several weeks before you feel their full benefits.

Therapy involves sessions with a therapist or counselor who can help you understand and resolve problems.

For milder depression, therapy may be the only treatment needed, according to the American Psychiatric Association. When depression is more severe, a combination of medicine and therapy is often necessary.

Seeing a health care provider (HCP) is key to a proper diagnosis and treatment of depression.

In addition, these tips from the NIMH may help you cope with depression while you’re undergoing treatment:

- Set realistic goals in light of the depression. Break large tasks into small ones, set some priorities and do what you can as you’re able.
- Try to do things that make you feel good, such as going to a movie or a ballgame. Exercise may also help.
- Try to postpone important decisions until you’re feeling better.

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also help you get better faster. The drugs work best if you start taking them within two days of having signs of the flu.

Q. What should I do if I get sick?

A. More than likely, you’ll get better all on your own.

However, you should call your

health care provider (HCP) if your symptoms are really bad or if you’re in the group who is at high risk for problems from the 2009 H1N1 flu. That group includes:

- Children under 2 years old.
- Pregnant women and women who have recently been pregnant.
- People who have a chronic medical condition—such as asthma, diabetes or HIV—that puts them at risk. Or anyone who has a disorder that can affect breathing—such as a spinal cord injury or a seizure disorder.

■ Anyone younger than 19 years old who is on long-term aspirin therapy.

Also, stay home unless you need to get medical care. And avoid contact with other people as much as possible. This will help keep them from getting sick too. You may be able to spread the flu for up to seven days after you get sick. Children may be able to spread the disease for even longer than that.

To learn more about H1N1 flu, go to www.cdc.gov/H1N1.

Lead poisoning

Protect your child

Lead can harm anyone, especially a child. It can affect how a child learns, acts and grows.

You can't see or smell lead in a product. But it can be found in many places and in certain objects, including toys.

Follow these tips to help keep your child safe:

■ Be aware of toy recalls. Some new toys may contain too much lead. These toys need to be

returned to the manufacturer.

■ Visit the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission website at www.cpsc.gov or call **800-638-2772** to learn more about toy recalls.

■ Give your child foods high in calcium and iron. They help lower the amount of lead that the body will absorb. These foods include lean meats, beans and low-fat dairy products.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Important pharmacy information

Here is important information you need to know. Your benefits are not changing. Beginning October 1, 2009, you will get your pharmacy benefits from MO HealthNet Fee-For-Service by using your MO HealthNet card.

You don't need to do anything to keep all of the benefits and

the great service you already receive from Missouri Care.

This is just a change in how your benefits are handled.

Remember, starting October 1, 2009, take your MO HealthNet card to the pharmacy. If you have questions, call MO HealthNet Participant Services at **800-392-2161** or **573-751-6527**.

Vision provider changes

Missouri Care Health Plan is pleased to announce a new change in your health care benefits. You will have a new vision care provider.



March Vision

Effective October 1, 2009, March Vision will provide the vision coverage that Missouri Care's members have previously received through Crown Vision.

To find out if your vision provider is participating, please call Missouri Care Member Services at **800-322-6027** (TDD **800-735-2966**).

You will receive a new Missouri Care identification card and handbook in the mail.

Do you have questions about your health?

Missouri Care is excited to introduce a new way to provide health education to our members. Krames On-Demand is a patient-education system that provides patient education in 37 specialty areas.

Krames On-Demand offers more than 4,000 healthsheets on topics, such as "What Does the Brain Do," and "How to Breastfeed." More than 2,200 of the sheets are available in English and Spanish, with some sheets available in other languages.

You may receive healthsheets from your case manager in the future. As a Missouri Care member, you will be able to look up information in Krames On-Demand through a link on our website at www.missouricare.com. Look for it coming soon!