



**New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services**  
September 15, 2009

Frequently Asked Questions on H1N1 and Testing

**What testing is required to determine if someone has H1N1 influenza?**

H1N1 can be confirmed in someone with a sample, usually nasal, sent to the New Hampshire Public Health Lab, part of the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, or another accredited lab facility in the State. When H1N1 was first discovered, only the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention could test for the presence of H1N1. Then all the State Public Health Labs were given the proper reagents from CDC to do testing, and now other labs have the capability.

**What about the tests done in my doctor's office?**

The rapid test done in a physician's office can tell if someone has influenza, but it cannot determine the particular type of influenza the person may have.

**Is the State still testing people for H1N1?**

In the beginning of the H1N1 outbreak, the NH Public Health Labs were testing all samples, to determine how widespread the illness was, and reporting the results back to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Over the summer, DHHS stopped testing for the disease because it was already present throughout the State and further testing would not have told the public anything new. DHHS continues to do testing for outbreak investigations, such as large numbers of cases in one location or unusual illness.

**How will my doctor know what to do for me if he/she does not know if I have H1N1?**

The treatment for seasonal flu and H1N1 are essentially the same—antivirals if the patient is determined to be at risk of severe illness and staying home and resting and taking appropriate medications, such as fever reducers, as needed.

**If I am in one of the risk categories, shouldn't I be tested to see if I have H1N1?**

Since the treatment you receive depends on your risk rather than on the strain of influenza you may have, further testing to determine the strain of flu you may have is not going to be of any benefit. If you have any risk factors for serious illness, be sure to talk with your healthcare provider.

**What are the risk factors for serious illness with H1N1 influenza (flu)?**

Risk factors include being pregnant, being younger than 25 years of age, having certain pre-existing medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, a suppressed immune system, heart disease, kidney disease, and neurocognitive and neuromuscular disorders.

**What can I do to prevent getting H1N1?**

The best prevention method is to receive the vaccine when it becomes available. People in the high risk categories are to be vaccinated first. The other steps everyone should take to prevent getting H1N1 influenza, seasonal flu, and other illnesses are to wash your hands frequently with soap and water or to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, cough and sneeze into your elbow to avoid spreading germs to others, and stay home from school and work if you are ill. Also getting enough sleep and eating a healthy diet will reduce your chance of becoming ill.

For more information about H1N1 and the antivirals, visit the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Service website at: [www.dhhs.nh.gov](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov) or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).