

Most countries have confirmed cases of H1N1 (swine flu). The United States continues to report the largest number of H1N1 hospitalized cases of any country worldwide; however, most people who have become ill have recovered without requiring medical treatment. This flu is similar to the seasonal flu that occurs every year in the U.S. Seasonal flu puts 200,000 people in the hospital and causes hundreds of thousands of illnesses. It does appear that the new virus is spread as easily as seasonal influenza. However, unlike seasonal flu, H1N1 virus more seriously affects those who are younger. New cases of H1N1 are reported every week in our state, and we are now preparing for a new wave of infections during the fall/winter flu season.

The Center for Spiritual Living taking the following steps to actively promote health within our congregation.

- Educate the volunteers in our community on the prevention of spreading the virus.
<http://www.osha.gov/Publications/protect-yourself-pandemic.html>
- Increase hand washing practice. Hand sanitizer will be available in all the restrooms. Volunteers and congregants are encouraged to wash their hands frequently throughout the time they are on campus.
- Respect peoples request to not be touched. Please make adjustments to your typical Sunday morning activities at church. Physical contact is inevitable for staff and volunteers on Sunday morning however, to decrease the risk of the virus spreading through handshakes and other routine touch, please respect the fact that some people in the congregation may want to limit their physical contact with others, consider a Namaste bow in place of a hug if appropriate.
- Increase awareness around food and make sure to stick by a “take what you touch” policy
- Strictly adhere to the healthy child policies that ensure a safe environment for our children.
- Encourage members who are experiencing illness to stay home, contact the Compassionate Heart Ministry line for support 206- 527-8801 X 217, watch the web cast of service on Sunday night and get well.
- Encouraging those providing pastoral care to take infectious disease precaution training

Be assured:

- Our bathrooms are disinfected frequently during services and events.
- Our nursery and toddler room are disinfected after every service
- Our children’s toys are disinfected regularly and the nursery staff try their hardest to keep toys from passing from child to child.
- Our kitchen staff follows Washington State food handling guidelines

If the outbreak moves to a Stage 6 Pandemic, state and local authorities may initiate mandatory closures of public events and gatherings.

If the virus escalates please know:

- Our phone system will be updated regarding if we are having services, it would be our intention to record the talk portion of services and broadcast it through the existing media, rather than hold church services on campus.

Background information regarding H1N1 virus from the state of Washington.

http://www.doh.wa.gov/h1n1/h1n1_faq.htm

How serious is H1N1 (swine flu)?

Influenza is a respiratory illness. People who get H1N1 flu have the same symptoms as people with seasonal flu. Just like seasonal flu, however, H1N1 can lead to pneumonia, and in some cases, death.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 flu?

Symptoms are similar to those for seasonal influenza. Those symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches and headache. If you have symptoms of influenza such as fever, cough and sore throat, and are at risk for severe complications of influenza (children under two years old; pregnant women; adults over 65 years old; residents of long-term care facilities; people with chronic lung, heart, kidney or liver disease; diabetes; sickle cell anemia; immunosuppression or receiving chemotherapy for cancer), you should contact your health care provider.

Anyone with fever and severe respiratory symptoms, such as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, should contact their health care provider.

How do people get H1N1 (swine flu)?

You can become infected by the H1N1 influenza virus when an infected person coughs or sneezes droplets near you and you take in the virus through your mouth, nose or eyes. You can also get the virus by touching a contaminated surface such as a countertop or doorknob, and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

Who will be able to get vaccinated?

Although vaccine manufacturers are making enough H1N1 vaccine for everyone in the United States, when it is introduced in October there may not be enough vaccine for everyone so the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has suggested that the following groups be among the first to get vaccine:

Pregnant women.

Caregivers and household contacts for children younger than six months of age.

Health care and emergency services workers.

Everyone from six months to 24 years of age.

Those from 25 to 64 years of age with health conditions that put them at higher risk of complications from the flu.

This years seasonal flu vaccine is not affective against the H1N1 virus.