



ParkwayHealth Medical Advisory

2009 H1N1 Update – November 11th, 2009

By: Dr. Yong Lee, VP of Medical Services, ParkwayHealth North Asia

What is the current situation?

The 2009 H1N1 virus is now widespread in more than 190 countries worldwide. In China, all mainland provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities collecting data have reported 2009 H1N1 flu cases. The number of globally confirmed cases, however, likely represents a substantial underestimation of total cases in the world, as many countries focus surveillance and laboratory testing only on people who are severely ill. Additionally, according to the WHO, many governments have stopped the official counting of minor cases.

Location	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Worldwide	More than 440,000*	More than 5700*
China	59,478**	30**
Shanghai	1042**	None**

*Source: www.who.int **Source: <http://news.sohu.com>
Current as of November 11th, 2009

What is the current availability of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine?

The Chinese government started providing the 2009 H1N1 vaccinations at end of September 2009, mainly to participants in the National Day celebrations in Beijing. The local health authorities in Shanghai have announced that they are going to provide the 2009 H1N1 vaccine free of charge to all students of international schools. They are also planning to provide the seasonal flu vaccine to all students of international schools. Both vaccines are manufactured in China. The 2009 H1N1 vaccine is not currently available in any foreign-run hospitals or clinics, including ParkwayHealth.

How safe is the 2009 H1N1 vaccine?

The WHO has declared that the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine made in China has proven to be safe and effective and is recommended for people at high risk. The results of studies reported to date suggest that the 2009 H1N1 vaccine is as safe as the seasonal influenza vaccine. According to the China CDC, testing was done on 13,000 volunteers in China before the 2009 H1N1 vaccine was approved. To date, approximately 4 million doses of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine have been administered in China without any reports of significant side effects or deaths resulting from the vaccine, while 30 deaths have been reported from about 60,000 confirmed cases of the 2009 H1N1 flu in China. Drawing from the experience of prior influenza pandemics, 30% or more of the whole population may become infected with the 2009 H1N1 virus.

An international panel of vaccine experts has advised that a single dose of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine will likely offer anyone over six months of age protection against the 2009 H1N1 virus. It's important to note, however, that even very large clinical studies will not be able to identify possible rare complications that can sometimes occur when pandemic vaccines are administered to many millions of people. Whether to get the vaccine is an individual decision, best decided by parents in consultation with their Family Physician.

Who has been recommended to receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine?

The WHO has recommended that certain higher risk groups receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine when it first becomes available. These target groups include pregnant women, people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age, healthcare and emergency medical services personnel, persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old, and people ages of 25 through 64 years of age who are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

What steps can I take to help avoid spreading and/or contracting the virus?

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or cough. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your upper arm rather than covering your mouth with your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth as virus germs spread easily that way.
- Stay home if you get sick. The CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.

What can I do to prepare?

Stock up now on over-the-counter medicines such as Tylenol, ibuprofen, cough suppressants, and decongestants. We may see shortages of these medicines here in Shanghai this flu season. Tamiflu, or its local equivalent, may be available in limited quantities, but will likely only be prescribed for treatment and not for prevention.

What should I do if I get sick?

See a doctor right away. It's important that your doctor assesses how sick you are because this virus can become complicated by a secondary bacterial infection leading to pneumonia. For children, a doctor can also assess hydration and respiratory status.

If one of my family members or I have the flu, can I still visit the ParkwayHealth clinic?

YES- The routine processes for managing patients with infections are still in effect. Screening procedures may be in place at a later date pending the Shanghai Health Bureau's instructions. Those seen at our facilities with mild flu symptoms will be treated as usual. For patients with severe symptoms or in the situation of a group outbreak of positive Influenza A, 2009 H1N1 confirmatory testing will be recommended at the designated centers. Lab tests and medications may not be recommended, depending upon the case. Self quarantine at home for at least 7 days is advisable for those who are not severely ill.

Comparison Table for the Common Cold – Seasonal Flu – 2009 H1N1

Symptoms	Cold	Flu	2009 H1N1
Fever	None or low grade	Characteristically high (>102 degrees F/39 degrees C); lasts 2-5 days	Same as regular flu
Headache	Rare	Prominent	Same
General aches and pains	Slight	Usual; often severe	Same
Fatigue , weakness	Quite mild	Can last up to 2-3 weeks	Same
Extreme exhaustion	Never	Early and prominent	Same
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes	Same
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes	Same
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes	Same
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild to moderate; hacking cough	Common; can become severe	Same
Diarrhea	Uncommon	Uncommon	About 25%
Nausea/vomiting	Uncommon	Uncommon except in children	About 25%
Complications	Sinus congestion or earache	Bronchitis, pneumonia; can be life-threatening	Same
Prevention	Good hygiene	Annual flu vaccine; Good hygiene	2009 H1N1 vaccine; Good hygiene
Treatment	Only temporary relief of symptoms	Antiviral drugs within 24-48 hours of onset for severe cases or high risk patients	Same except some differences in resistance patterns
Duration	3-7 days, although many people have symptoms for up to 2 weeks	Days to weeks	Same

For additional information regarding the 2009 H1N1 virus, please click [here](#).