

## **H1N1: Part 3**

Hello, I am Doctor Ron Cook, a family physician in the Department of Family Medicine here at Texas Tech. I am also the city of Lubbock's health authority.

We just want to give you an update. I will tell you that we are seeing some H1N1 on the main campus. We have diagnosed about sixteen cases of H1N1 flu since the beginning of school. We have also seen about 60 cases of what we call an influenza-like illness that is very similar, but not quite as severe as the H1N1.

### **What can you do to help prevent illness?**

- One thing that you can do is make sure that you get plenty of rest.
- The other thing you can do is make sure you cover your cough so that you don't spread your germs to someone else who might be well. Those respiratory droplets only carry about three feet, that's about an arm's length, at most about six feet. So make sure you cover your cough whenever you do that. Use a tissue to cover your mouth or you can cough into your sleeve to help cover your cough.
- The other thing to do is make sure you wash your hands frequently. If you use soap and water make sure you wash your hands for about 20 seconds. If you don't have soap and water available, make sure you use hand sanitizers, those alcohol-based hand sanitizers that are so readily available at all kinds of little convenient stores or grocery stores. They are small enough that you can carry them in your back pack or purse.

### **What do you do if you get sick?**

- You stay home. You need to stay home for about 24 hours after your fever leaves you. You are infectious until at least 24 hours later.
- You can get your seasonal flu vaccine. Right now the Student Wellness Center on the main campus has the seasonal flu vaccine. We strongly encourage you to get that seasonal flu vaccine now. If you have not received it you need to make an appointment by calling (806) 743-2848. That vaccine is for seasonal flu which is different from the H1N1 flu.
- Texas Tech is on the schedule to receive about 35,000 doses of H1N1 flu. We have not received that yet. We have registered to receive about 35,000 doses. As those allotments come in we will notify you and schedule those appointments to get the H1N1 flu vaccines as we receive it.

### **How serious is H1N1 compared to the seasonal flu?**

- Honestly, it's probably a little bit more mild, but it still affects a different age population. Primarily your age population tends to get more sick than the older population.

### **What are the symptoms of H1N1?**

- The most common symptom of the H1N1 flu is a very high fever. Most of the people coming in with H1N1 flu have a fever of at least 102. You can imagine how sick you are going to feel if you have a 102 fever.
- Your muscles are going to hurt all over.
- You are going to cough.
- You are going to have a sore throat.
- You may have a belly ache, some stomach pains, some nausea vomiting or diarrhea.
- Again, you are going to be achy all over.

### **So what do you do if you get the flu?**

- The number one thing you need to do is stay home. Stay away from well people. The virus is going to last anywhere from three to five days once you get the flu. Remember you need to stay at home 24 hours after your fever resolves. You will be infectious during that time.
- The other thing that you need to do is to make sure that you drink lots of fluids so that you do not get dehydrated. You need to drink sports drinks like Gatorade or Powerade; those sports drinks have electrolytes. Don't scrimp on the diet ones, make sure you get the ones fully loaded with sugar so you can have some calories to help prevent some of those energy requirements that you need to heal with. Drink lots of fluids. You can take Tylenol, Motrin or Aleve to help with those headaches or sore throats, aches and pains. Those three medicines will really help them. Stay away from Aspirin products or other products that contain Aspirin such as Pepto-Bismol.
- You know your mother's chicken noodle soup is very good to take during this time. It has some salt in it, and has some other electrolytes; it has some calories in the form of the noodles and the carbohydrates. It also has a little protein to get some calories in you. Your mother's chicken noodle soup is really good to take while you are sick.

- Also get plenty of rest. Rest is very important.

### **When do you need to call a doctor or see a physician?**

- You need to go see a physician if you are having difficulties breathing or you can't catch your breath. If you're wheezing a bunch, you need to call in and come see a physician if you get blue around the lips or short of breath.
- If you are so dehydrated because you're having so much diarrhea or vomiting, you need to make sure you come in and see a health care provider.
- Also if you're not urinating frequently or if your urine is very strong, very strong yellow in color, or if it has been more than four hours, you are not keeping enough fluids down to create enough urine. Another sign of dehydration is dizziness, or loss of consciousness. Also if you have altered mental status and your thinking is unclear, you need to tell somebody so we can get you into the physician.

We want you to stay up to date, that is our job here. There are three websites I would like for you to look at:

- Texas Tech's H1N1 flu Web site at <http://www.ttu.edu/flu/>
- Texas Department of State Health Services Web site at [www.texasflu.org](http://www.texasflu.org)
- CDCs Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

Our job here is to keep you informed. We want you to stay healthy and we will keep you updated.