



## What you should know about New Flu ("Swine Flu")

[www.neuegrippe.bund.de](http://www.neuegrippe.bund.de)

### What is New Flu?

New Flu, also known as swine flu or New Influenza, is triggered by the **pandemic influenza virus A (H1N1)**. It is a new variant of a known flu virus. The virus is easily transmitted from person to person. Most people have not yet developed a specific defence against the new virus. Throughout the world very many people are contracting the disease. One therefore speaks of a pandemic.

### How dangerous is New Flu?

Up to now the disease has taken a relatively mild course, but in badly-affected countries there have been critical cases and even deaths. With the increasing number of cases, the probability of the disease taking a critical course increases, also in Germany. Furthermore, the pathogenic effect of the virus could become more intense through genetic changes.

### How can one recognize New Flu?

**The symptoms** of New Flu are similar to those of the seasonal flu that occurs every winter, also in Germany: a feverish temperature, coughing, headaches and aching limbs, tiredness, loss of appetite as well as nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea can occur.

**Contagion** takes place from person to person through droplet infection. This means that viruses are transmitted directly through sneezing, coughing, speaking or kissing. Droplets containing viruses adhere to surfaces, such as door handles, and from there they are transferred by hand to the mucous membranes of the mouth, nose or eyes.

It is assumed that patients can transmit viruses – that is, infect others – for one week. It is also assumed that many people who have fallen ill with New Flu transmit viruses even before symptoms occur.

**The incubation period** is the time from contagion to the onset of the disease; it generally lasts one to two days, but can also last four days, as in the case of seasonal influenza.

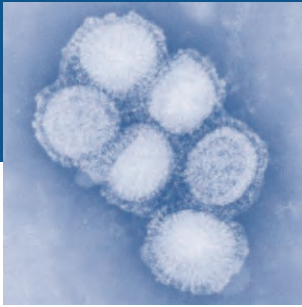
### Who belong to high-risk groups?

The risk of the disease taking a critical course is particularly high with persons suffering from chronic illnesses (for example, asthma, diabetes etc.), persons with a weak immune system and pregnant women.

### What should be done in the case of illness?

If you suspect that you have contracted New Flu you should observe the following rules:

- **Remain at home**, in order not to infect other people. This applies, in particular, if you work in a community facility, such as a day-care centre or school, or if you care for the critically ill or persons with a weak immune system in a nursing home or hospital.
- **Telephone your doctor** and give him or her precise details of your symptoms. **Arrange further steps with the doctor on the telephone.**
- **Avoid close contact** with other persons on the way to the doctor's surgery.



Electron-microscopic image of the New Influenza virus A (H1N1)



## What should you do to protect yourself and others?

You can reduce the risk of infection with a number of simple measures:

1. Wash your hands several times a day and keep them away from your face.
2. Sneeze and cough properly. This means keeping a distance to other people, and sneezing or coughing into your elbow or a disposable tissue and not into your hand.
3. Watch out for the first signs of illness.
4. Stay at home if you fall ill.
5. Take time to cure the disease.
6. In the case of illness, avoid physical contact to others, such as kissing and embracing.
7. Regularly air closed rooms to reduce the number of viruses in the air.
8. Regularly clean surfaces in your home.

You can find further information on these measures at: [www.wir-gegen-viren.de](http://www.wir-gegen-viren.de)

## How is Germany prepared for New Flu?

**Germany has prepared itself for some years for an influenza pandemic, and has developed corresponding plans and recommendations for action. One protective measure for the population is vaccination against New Flu.**

In a pandemic, medical care and public safety must be maintained, and the spread of the disease among the population reduced. For this reason, vaccination must be first offered to persons exposed to a high risk of the disease taking a critical course, and to those who have close occupational contact to particularly endangered persons. Further details are contained in the recommendations of the Standing Commission on Vaccination (STIKO) and of responsible state (Länder) health authorities.

Vaccination can probably begin in October, at which time public appeals will be made.

Antiviral drugs are available for **treatment** of the New Flu. The federal states (Länder) and the Federal Government have accumulated a stock of antiviral drugs. These drugs are only available on prescription, and have to be prescribed by a doctor.

## What can one do if New Flu further spreads in Germany?

Take precautions now, so that if you live alone and fall ill, or if your whole family falls ill, you will be supported by friends or neighbours; and offer your own support to other people.

In order not to infect other people it is wise to reduce social contact to an essential minimum. Many people, however, are dependent on the daily assistance of others. Consider now, who in your circle could run into difficulties in the case of such a precautionary measure, and think about how help could be provided.

In a pandemic it could be wise to order the closure of schools. Consider now how, should this occur, the care of your children could be guaranteed, without turning to group care.

## Further information

The spread and course of New Flu is being intensively monitored in Germany. The Federal Government provides information on the Internet on the present situation, as well as on all important questions concerning possibilities of prevention, behaviour in the case of infection, travel, vaccine and vaccination. The full range of information services can be found at:

[www.neuegrippe.bund.de](http://www.neuegrippe.bund.de)

General information on New Flu ("swine flu") can be obtained on the telephone hotline of the Federal Ministry of Health from Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.:

**030 346465100**

Information on vaccination is also provided by local health authorities, and many federal states also operate a central telephone hotline:

Bavaria		089-31 56 01 01
Bremen		0421 361 14444
Bremerhaven		0471 596 14444
Hamburg		040-4 28 37 37 95
Lower Saxony		0511-4 50 55 55
North-Rhine Westphalia		0180-3 10 02 10*
Rhineland-Palatinate		06131-16 52 00
Saarland	(general)	0681-5 01 36 94
	(vaccination)	0681-5 01 36 95
Saxony-Anhalt		0391-5 37 7111
Schleswig-Holstein		0431-1 60 66 66
Thuringia		0361-37 74 30 99

\*Chargeable: 9c/min from the German fixed-line network; other charges are possible from mobile networks

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