
Introduction

Transmission of H1N1 flu virus is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu. The symptoms and duration of infection can be lessened, with antiviral medication.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 Flu?

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Lack of appetite
- Coughing
- Sore Throat
- Pain
- In muscles and joints
- Headache and chills

Some patients with flu have also reported vomiting and diarrhoea.

How is it spread?

The virus is contagious and can spread between people, although it is not known how easily. Transmission of H1N1 flu virus is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu:-

- Person to person by coughing or sneezing or by touching items that may have been infected by someone with flu. e.g. door handles.

What are the general requirements to reduce cross infection?

For all patients, good general hygiene reduces transmission of all viruses. This includes:-

- Covering your nose when coughing or sneezing,
- using a tissue where possible. Dispose of tissues promptly and carefully into the waste bin, then wash your hands.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water will reduce the chance of the virus spreading to yourself or others.

For suspected or confirmed H1N1 Flu patients

All of the above actions are required plus you will be asked to wear a surgical mask as instructed by the medical or nursing staff if you are being transported to another department within the hospital i.e. X-ray dept.

You will be nursed in a designated area and the doors will need to remain closed at all opportunities.

Who is at risk?

Individuals with underlying conditions such as chronic lung problems, kidneys or heart disease, plus children under 5, adults over 65 and pregnant women are more vulnerable. While H1N1 flu is generally mild, it is proving severe in a small number of cases.

Will I be able to receive visitors?

Due to the spread of H1N1 flu, you will be requested to keep your visitors to an absolute minimum. This may be limited to a maximum of just two people. Children should not visit.

- Gloves and aprons are not required unless they are participating in "hands on" care.
- Visitors will be requested to decontaminate hands before and after visiting.

- Visitors should be restricted to the isolation room or cohort ward and should not use the canteen facilities.
- Visitors showing flu like symptoms must be asked to go home and contact their GP by phone.

What about the staff?

Healthcare workers will be expected to wear gloves, plastic apron and **surgical** mask within 1 metre contact of the patient the isolation room or area.

What is the treatment?

H1N1 flu can be treated with antiviral medication call Tamiflu or Relenza. This does not cure the infection but reduces the impact on the body and aids recovery. As the episodes of flu continue Doctors will assess the individuals need to have this treatment.

A H1N1 vaccine is available and will be distributed under the guidance of medical teams

What is the infectious period?

- Patients who need to remain in hospital will be isolated in a designated area from onset of symptoms.
- If treated with antiviral (Tamiflu or Relenza), consider as non-infectious after four days, provided fever-free for at least 24 hours
- If not treated with antiviral, consider as non-infectious after Seven days, provided fever-free for at least 24 hours
- If your admission extends beyond this period and your symptoms have resolved you may be transferred to a different area. If still symptomatic with acute flu symptoms, isolation should continue until 24 hours symptom-free.

What if I need further advice?

The Infection Prevention Team will be in regular contact with the ward during the peak period of seasonal flu. If you have any further queries, ask a member of staff to contact the Infection Prevention Team.

Office Hours 8.30am – 4.30pm

Royal Gwent Hospital 01633 238101 / 4921

Nevill Hall Hospital 01873 732048 / 2613

Community Hospitals 01495 768781/07903 324603

Out of Hours:-

Contact the on-call Microbiologist via the hospital switchboard.