



# Columbia County Department of Health

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Columbia County has its first positive case of H1N1 swine flu. The Columbia County Health Department that has been using the emergency preparedness plan already in place that includes increased surveillance, protocols, education and awareness in conjunction with the New York State Health Department, Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the World Health Organization (WHO) is ready. Similar cases have been reported in other areas of the state. This case is a mild case and the patient is expected to make a full recovery.

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions. The public is encouraged to call their primary care physician first if you are experiencing any of the symptoms.

The Columbia County Health Department reminds everyone that you can help to prevent the spread of Flu, by washing your hands often, avoiding close contact with people who are sick, if possible staying home from work or school when you are sick, covering your cough or sneeze, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Most flu patients can be cared for at home with supportive treatment to reduce their temperature and maintain an adequate fluid intake. However, children should not be given aspirin to reduce pain or fever because it could cause a rare but potentially serious condition called Reye's Syndrome.

**Flu patients who have difficulty breathing or who suffer dehydration do require medical intervention.** Parents should be aware that children can become dehydrated in a short amount of time. Things to be concerned about are dry mouth and tongue; lack of tears, dark circles or sunken eyes, decreased urine output and lethargy (extreme drowsiness or pronounced lack of interest). If these circumstances occur, call your health care provider. Call 9-1-1 if your healthcare provider cannot be reached.

For information on caring for a flu patient at home, visit [www.nyhealth.gov](http://www.nyhealth.gov) .

Take measures, as well, to reduce your risk of getting infected.

- If you are caring for someone with flu, keep the person away from others in the home. Limit the amount of time you spend in close contact with the ill person and wear a mask during this time.
- Wash your hands frequently using soap and hot water. If you are not near a sink, use a waterless hand rub.
- Keep your hands away from your mouth, nose or eyes.
- Use a disinfectant on surfaces the patient has contacted.
- Make sure you get sufficient rest and exercise, and eat well. This will help to enhance your immune system.

To help protect others, always cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, and discard it appropriately. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the bend of your arm—not your hand. This will prevent germs from being transmitted to surfaces such as desktops, railings and doorknobs.

Columbia County residents can call 828-1212 to reach a hot line number as a point of contact for all questions about the H1N1 swine flu only. Residents are also encouraged to visit these web sites for the most current updated information: [www.nyhealth.gov](http://www.nyhealth.gov), [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), [www.columbiacountyny.com](http://www.columbiacountyny.com), or [www.who.int](http://www.who.int).