

Warning Signs

[Host] During a severe flu outbreak, including the new H1N1 flu, many of us may become ill at the same time. There may be more hospital stays and deaths than during a normal flu season. It is likely that most of us may become a little anxious as to whether we have the illness or whether we should seek medical help. Dr. Bresee, how will we know when we have the flu?

[Dr. Joe Bresee] Well, the symptoms of seasonal flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, chills, and fatigue. Some people may also have vomiting or diarrhea, especially in children. Studies have shown that the symptoms of the new H1N1 virus are the same as those of seasonal flu. Of course, some people get seriously ill, and hospitals will have to focus on those in the greatest need. Because of that, people have to make a judgment about when to go to the doctor.

[Host] And how will people know when it's serious enough to get medical help?

[Dr. Joe Bresee] People with the following symptoms should call for emergency medical help immediately: signs of breathing or heart problems, like chest pain, shortness of breath, bluish or purplish lips; signs of dehydration, like yellowish or leathery skin, decreased urination, or confusion. Sometimes children will have no tears when they cry.

[Host] And Doctor, where can people go to get a full list of these symptoms?

[Dr. Joe Bresee] For more information, people should visit www.flu.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

[Host] Thank you, Doctor.