



# The Safety Corner

From the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned

10 October 2009



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## Swine Flu Cases Climb Among U.S. Soldiers In Iraq

[USA Today](#)



There have been 67 confirmed cases of H1N1 Swine Flu among American troops in Iraq with dozens more suspected, Iraqi officials said, making U.S. soldiers the single largest group in the country to come down with the virus. American soldiers account for more than two-thirds of Iraq's 96 swine flu cases, according to figures released by the Iraqi Health Ministry, as it presented steps being taken to control the spread of the virus that last week claimed its first fatality in Iraq.

In addition to the soldiers, 23 Iraqis and six foreigners have been diagnosed with the virus, said Dr. Amer al-Khuzai, the deputy health minister. A 21-year-old woman, described in poor health, died in the southern city of Najaf where she had been visiting Shiite shrines.

All American soldiers diagnosed with swine flu have either recovered or are undergoing treatment, he said, adding that there have been no fatalities among U.S. forces. The U.S. military confirmed the 67 cases, an increase from the 51 it reported earlier. It also said 71 suspected cases were in isolation. "None have been significantly ill. None have required hospitalization or evacuation, said Col Michael D. Eisenhauer.

Swine flu cases have been diagnosed at six American bases in Iraq, he said. The military has been giving the ministry weekly updates on the number of cases found on their bases in Iraq. There has not been a sudden outbreak; the cases have appeared since the military began screening for the virus ."

In May, 18 soldiers on their way to Iraq were diagnosed with swine flu while in Kuwait, leading to an agreement between Iraq and the U.S. military to share information about the number of confirmed cases. Troops heading to and from Afghanistan and Iraq are now also screened.

In Afghanistan, 14 U.S. personnel were diagnosed with and treated for swine flu in June at Bagram Air Base, the main U.S. base north of Kabul. In the western Afghan city of Herat, 22 Spanish soldiers were quarantined with suspected cases in July. The Iraqi Health Ministry said the higher prevalence of the flu in U.S. troops than Iraqis was likely a combination of factors, such as their close living quarters and their Travels.

"We think they have this many cases because they come through different countries to come here. They come from the United States. They come from Europe," Dr. Al-Khuzai said. Health officials caught 10 cases of swine flu at Baghdad's International Airport during the now routine screenings of arriving travelers, said Dr. Sabah Karkukly, who oversees the ministry's swine flu program.

(continued)

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## Swine Flu Cases Climb Among U.S. Soldiers In Iraq (continued)

Two more cases were found in the southern city of Najaf, while three others were reported in Karbala. The cases in the south raise concern about Iraq's ability to control the virus' spread among millions of Shiites who regularly visit the shrines in Najaf and Karbala.

Al-Khuzai cautioned Iraqis to avoid crowded places, including religious sites, where the virus can easily be transmitted. Iraq's Cabinet on Wednesday banned trips to Saudi Arabia's holy city of Mecca during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, during which millions of pilgrims will mingle at the holy sites there.

Iraq also has joined other countries in preventing children, the elderly and the chronically ill from the annual Hajj pilgrimage in late November. The World Health Organization, as of July 31, had tallied more than 162,000 swine flu cases worldwide. It counted at least 1,154 deaths, with more than 1,000 reported in the Americas, according to its website.

The Health Ministry also launched a public health campaign using posters, leaflets, television advertisements and radio spots to educate Iraqis about how to prevent transmission of the virus and what to do if they catch swine flu.

### Confirmed Cases

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ◆ 69 cases USS Boxer                           | 1 case Naval Dental Center San Diego          |
| ◆ 28 cases USS Dubuque                         | 1 case Afloat Training Group in San Diego     |
| ◆ 5 cases Naval Special Warfare Center         | 1 case Naval Base San Diego                   |
| ◆ 3 cases Naval Base Coronado                  | 1 case Camp Pendleton                         |
| ◆ 1 case Seal Team 7                           | 1 case Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 77 |
| ◆ 1 case USS Nimitz                            | 1 case Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron 10  |
| ◆ 1 case One Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 12 | 1 case Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, AZ      |
| ◆ 1 case Naval Medical Center San Diego        |   |

Source: [Navy Times](#)

### Autopsy Confirms Soldier Died Of Swine Flu

A Fort Jackson soldier who died Sept. 10 is the first Army member to die from complications caused by the H1N1 virus, commonly called swine flu. Autopsy results showed the soldier from Deltona, Fla., died from pneumonia caused by the H1N1 influenza. The soldier reported to sick call September 1st with a fever and was treated at Moncrief. On September 3rd he was transferred to Palmetto Health Richland after his symptoms worsened.

The soldier is possibly the first member of the U.S. armed forces to die from the H1N1 virus. To date no other H1N1 deaths have been recorded in the military. The flu season has started earlier than usual at Fort Jackson. As of Wednesday evening, 51 soldiers were being treated for flulike symptoms. None have been hospitalized, but they are resting in an isolated area known as "sick in quarters." While the soldiers don't have confirmed H1N1 cases, the Centers for Disease Control has said the vast majority of the flu now active is that strain. In South Carolina, there have been 76 hospitalizations with lab-confirmed cases of the flu since Aug. 30, according to DHEC.

Fort Jackson officials have taken the flu seriously. Dispensers of hand sanitizer are hanging on walls across the post, and every soldier has been issued a bottle of hand sanitizer. For now, officers greeting visitors will not shake hands, offering a hearty fist bump instead. Fort Jackson commanders, medical staff and other key officials put together a plan for flu when it first appeared in the spring. Soldiers in barracks sleep head to toe to minimize exposure to germs. And barracks and other common areas get regular scrubbing with bleach.

Fort Jackson expects to get its first order of H1N1 vaccine this month. Already, soldiers entering basic training are vaccinated against the seasonal flu. Fort Jackson is the Army's largest training base, where more than 10,000 soldiers are stationed at any given time. A flu pandemic could compromise the Army's ability to fight if the post does not continue to churn out soldiers. "We run the risk of not being able to produce the number of people we're feeding into the Army."

Read the Complete Article at: [The sun Times](#)



SA Megan Knutson, a medical technician at Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., fills a syringe with a vaccination. Air Force Reserve Command officials are encouraging reservists to be immunized this flu season. (U.S. Air Force photo/SA Zickmund)

Air Force Reserve Command is taking a more active role this year in preventing influenza-like illnesses, including the new H1N1 strain. "The first line of defense is understanding how the disease is transmitted," said LtCol Tim Bennett, AFRC public health officer. The flu and the H1N1 strain spread from person to person by small droplets formed from a sneeze or cough. These droplets pass to uninfected people when they shake hands, kiss or touch something recently touched by an infected person and then touch their face.

People can reduce their risks by frequently washing their hands and covering their faces or turning their heads when coughing or sneezing. "A second defensive weapon in our armament is a new FDA-approved vaccine that is specific to the H1N1 strain," said LTCol Bennett.

Public health officials say this new vaccine should be available in late October. If offered, the new vaccine can be given at the same time as the traditional seasonal vaccine. In the near future, Air Force Reserve Command will ask supervisors to track workplace absenteeism due to confirmed H1N1 and influenza-like illness, said LTCol Bennett. Tracking the rate of absenteeism will help determine if more preventative measures are necessary.

A third defense is the practice of social distancing to reduce the spread of disease by increasing the space between people. "This is the best way to sustain the mission while protecting the force," said LtCol Bennett.

Faced with significant absenteeism and possibly local school closures, supervisors may be directed to implement alternate work schedules, minimum manning, telecommuting and virtual meetings or other arrangements that keep personnel from working in close quarters. Symptoms do not always identify a particular disease, said Colonel Bennett. However, they can indicate when an individual has a transmissible disease such as influenza.

Symptoms to be aware of, outside of the normal cough and sore throat, include body aches, nausea and a fever of 100.5 Fahrenheit or higher that lasts several days or doesn't immediately respond to fever reducers. Officials at Headquarters AFRC encourage units to recommend members not report to their unit training assemblies if they have influenza-like symptoms. "Everyone should maintain a healthy lifestyle and take steps to protect the workforce and community," LTCol Bennett said. "By monitoring personal and family health, reservists can spot illnesses earlier and halt the chain of infection."

## Avian Influenza Pandemic May Expand The Military Role In Disaster Relief

By Colonel Frank William Sherod II United States Army

Recent involvement by the U.S. military with hurricane relief and comments by the President on expanding the DOD's role in disaster relief indicates increased missions for an already stretched military. The next national disaster facing the U.S. could be an influenza pandemic. The bird flu virus H5N1 currently threatening Asia and Europe can potentially mutate into a deadly human influenza pandemic with global consequences. The last major flu pandemic in 1918 killed 50 million people worldwide and 600,000 in the U.S. alone. The United States is not prepared for a human pandemic and the military will have a significant role in any national response.

The role of the United States military in disaster relief operations both internationally and domestically is increasing. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina in the United States gulf coast region, the President of the United States indicated the U.S. military will have an increased role in domestic disaster relief operations. This responsibility primarily belongs to the Department of Homeland Security at the federal level, but recent comments by some national leaders suggest that this could change.

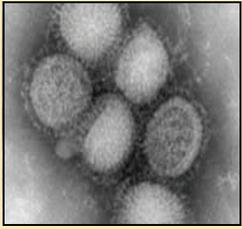
[Click her to read the rest of the article.](#) (Must be a registered MCCLL user)



### Did You Know?

Over the course of a lifetime, people are generally exposed to a wide variety of influenza viruses, many of which share similar genetic features. As a result, cross-protective immunity to different strains builds up over time. This buildup of immunity is partially responsible for a progressive decrease in seasonal influenza attack rates in older age groups.

[Source: DIA](#)



### What is H1N1 (swine flu)?

2009 H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This new virus was first detected in people in the United States in April 2009. This virus is spreading from person-to-person worldwide, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) signaled that a pandemic of H1N1 flu was underway.

### Why is H1N1 Virus sometimes called “Swine Flu”?

This virus was originally referred to as “swine flu” because laboratory testing showed that many of the genes in this new virus were very similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs in North America. But further study has shown that this new virus is very different from what normally circulates in North American pigs. It has two genes from flu viruses that normally circulate in pigs in Europe and Asia, plus bird (avian) genes and human genes. Scientists call this a “quadruple reassortant” virus.

### How does the H1N1 Virus spread?

Spread of H1N1 virus is thought to occur in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person-to-person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. Sometimes, people may become infected by touching something such as a surface or object with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

### What are the signs and symptoms of this virus in people?

The symptoms of H1N1 flu virus in people include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Severe illnesses and death has occurred as a result of illness associated with this virus.

### How severe is illness associated with 2009 H1N1 Flu Virus?

Illness with the new H1N1 virus has ranged from mild to severe. While most people who have been sick have recovered without needing medical treatment, hospitalizations and deaths from infection with this virus have occurred. In seasonal flu, certain people are at “high risk” of serious complications. This includes people 65 years and older, children younger than five years old, pregnant women, and people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions. About 70 percent of people who have been hospitalized with this H1N1 virus have had one or more medical conditions previously recognized as placing people at “high risk” of serious seasonal flu-related complications.

### These include:

Pregnancy  
Diabetes  
Heart disease  
Asthma  
Kidney disease

### What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

As always, a vaccine will be available to protect against H1N1 as well as a vaccine for the seasonal influenza. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza.

### Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- ◆ Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- ◆ Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- ◆ Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- ◆ Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- ◆ If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.

### Other important actions that you can take are:

- ◆ Follow public health advice regarding school closures.

(Continued)

## H1N1 Flu (Swine flu) And You (continued)

- ◆ Avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.
- ◆ Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home for a week or so; a supply of over-the-counter medicines, alcohol-based hand rubs, tissues and other related items could be useful and help avoid the need to make trips out in public while you are sick and contagious

### What is the best technique for washing hands to avoid getting the flu?

Washing or disinfecting your hands often will help protect you from germs. Wash with soap and water or clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner. CDC recommends that when you wash your hands with soap and warm water, that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.

### What should I do if I get sick?

If you live in areas where people have been identified with H1N1 flu and become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people.

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

### In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- ◆ Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- ◆ Bluish or gray skin color
- ◆ Not drinking enough fluids
- ◆ Severe or persistent vomiting
- ◆ Not waking up or not interacting
- ◆ Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- ◆ Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

### In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- ◆ Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- ◆ Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- ◆ Sudden dizziness
- ◆ Confusion
- ◆ Severe or persistent vomiting
- ◆ Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

### Flu Definitions:

**Seasonal (or common) flu** is a respiratory illness that can be transmitted person-to-person. Most people have some immunity, and a vaccine is available.

**Bird flu** is commonly used to refer to Avian flu (see below). Bird flu viruses infect birds, including chickens, other poultry and wild birds such as ducks.

**Avian flu (AI)** is caused by influenza viruses that occur naturally among wild birds. Low pathogenic AI is common in birds and causes few problems. Highly pathogenic H5N1 is deadly to domestic fowl, can be transmitted from birds to humans, and is deadly to humans. There is virtually no human immunity, and human vaccine availability is very limited.

**Pandemic flu** is virulent human flu that causes a global outbreak, or pandemic, of serious illness. Because there is little natural immunity, the disease can spread easily from person-to-person.

**H1N1 Flu Virus.** The novel H1N1 flu virus is causing illness in infected persons in the United States and countries around the world. This new virus was first detected in the U.S. in April 2009, and has spread to many countries around the world. CDC expects that illnesses may continue for some time. As a result, you or people around you may become ill. If so, you need to recognize the symptoms and know what to do.



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[Management of Outbreaks of  
Novel H1N1 Influenza](#)  
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You can prepare for an influenza pandemic now. You should know both the magnitude of what can happen during a pandemic outbreak and what actions you can take to help lessen the impact of an influenza pandemic on you and your family. This checklist will help you gather the information and resources you may need in case of a flu pandemic.

**To plan for a pandemic:**

- ◆ Store a two-week supply of water and food. During a pandemic, if you cannot get to a store, or if stores are out of supplies, it will be important for you to have extra supplies on hand. This can be useful in other types of emergencies, such as power outages and disasters.
- ◆ Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home.
- ◆ Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- ◆ Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them in your home.
- ◆ Volunteer with local groups to prepare and assist with emergency responses.
- ◆ Get involved in your community as it works to prepare for an influenza pandemic.

**Items to have on hand for an extended stay at home**

**Non-perishables**

- ◆ Ready-to-eat canned meats, fish, fruits, vegetables, beans, soups
- ◆ Protein or fruit bars
- ◆ Dry cereal or granola
- ◆ Peanut butter or nuts
- ◆ Dried fruit
- ◆ Crackers
- ◆ Canned juices
- ◆ Bottled water
- ◆ Canned or jarred baby food and formula
- ◆ Pet food
- ◆ Other non-perishable items

**Medical, health, and emergency supplies**

- ◆ Prescribed medical supplies
- ◆ Soap and water, or alcohol-based (60-95%) hand wash
- ◆ Medicines, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- ◆ Thermometer
- ◆ Anti-diarrheal medication
- ◆ Vitamins
- ◆ Fluids with electrolytes
- ◆ Cleansing agent/soap
- ◆ Tissues, toilet-paper, disposable-diapers

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**What to Do**

**About the Flu**

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**www.flu.gov**

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Not every infectious disease, such as a cold or the flu, can be treated by your health care provider. By knowing the various symptoms and home treatment solutions, you can avoid unnecessary visits to the doctor. You'll also be able to identify conditions that need medical attention.

	Influenza (including H1N1)	Colds	Strep Throat	Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)
Symptoms	<p>A sudden onset of any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever lasting 3-4 days about 102–104°</li> <li>• General aches and pains are extremely common and often severe</li> <li>• Fatigue and weakness can last up to 2–3 weeks, periodically resulting in extreme exhaustion</li> <li>• Cough, sore throat, chills, runny nose and headache are not uncommon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Runny nose, red eyes, sneezing, sore throat, sinus congestion, dry cough, wet cough without wheezing or rapid breathing, low-grade temperature, headache, general body aches</li> <li>• Gradual onset</li> <li>• A cold usually lasts about 1–2 weeks</li> <li>• One symptom usually precedes the others, while coughing and sore throat may persist after others have disappeared</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever, headache and throat pain (young children may complain of stomach pain rather than throat pain)</li> <li>• Swollen glands in the neck</li> <li>• Bright red tonsils that may have white spots on them</li> <li>• Some people develop a rash</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stuffy or runny nose</li> <li>• High fever (can be low-grade over age 3)</li> <li>• Severe cough and/or wheezing*</li> <li>• Shortness of breath or very fast rate of breathing*</li> <li>• Bluish color of the lips or fingernails*</li> <li>• Lethargy, irritability or listlessness*</li> <li>• Lack of appetite/poor feeding</li> <li>• Apnea*</li> <li>• Sore throat (typical from age 3–adult)</li> <li>• Headache</li> </ul> <p><b>*typical for infants less than age 3</b></p>
Home Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plug in a cool mist vaporizer or take a hot, steamy shower</li> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids. Dehydration drives your fever higher</li> <li>• Go to bed earlier than usual. This reduces stress and helps fight the infection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of liquids. Warm fluids will help relieve congestion</li> <li>• Use disposable tissues (reduces spread of virus.)</li> <li>• Petroleum jelly helps a sore nose</li> <li>• Use nasal decongestant sprays for only three days or less. Longer use may actually increase irritation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not attempt home treatment if you suspect you or someone you love may have strep throat. Contact your physician immediately</li> <li>• Complete all prescribed medications in full</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink plenty of fluids</li> <li>• Use a cool mist vaporizer</li> <li>• Use saline nose drops</li> <li>• Use non-aspirin fever medicine</li> <li>• Wash hands frequently/void touching face/eyes</li> <li>• Avoid public areas during RSV outbreaks</li> <li>• Get plenty of rest</li> </ul>
When To See Physician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are over the age of 65 or have a history of respiratory problems or chronic diseases, such as heart disease or diabetes</li> <li>• If you develop shortness of breath, painful breathing, earaches, pain around your eyes or cheekbones or bad sore throat</li> <li>• If you seem to get better, then get worse again</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If signs of pneumonia, bronchitis or other upper respiratory complications develop: increased coughing, difficulty breathing, high fever, ear pain, facial pain or chest pain</li> <li>• If symptoms persist beyond the typical duration of a cold (one or two weeks)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If your child has symptoms of strep throat, especially if someone in your family or at your child's school has recently had a strep infection</li> <li>• When you or your child develop any of the symptoms associated with strep throat (see above)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If your child has moderate difficulty Breathing indicated by breathing 40–60 times per-minute</li> <li>• Tires quickly during feeding/loss of appetite</li> <li>• Uses muscles in the stomach, neck or chest when breathing or if wheezing occurs</li> <li>• Has an unusual color. Skin becomes slightly gray or lacelike purple and pale white tongue, gums and lips remain pink</li> <li>• Excessive tiredness and lack of appetite</li> <li>• If child is less than 3 months old and fever greater than 100.4°</li> <li>• If signs of dehydration appear</li> </ul>

# "TOP TEN"

## Signs You Are Too Old to Be Trick or Treating

#10

You get winded from knocking on the door.

#9

You have to have another kid chew the candy for you.

#8

You ask for high fiber candy only.

#7

When someone drops a candy bar in your bag, you lose your balance and fall over.

#6

People say, "Great Keith Richards mask!" and you're not wearing a mask.

#5

When the door opens you yell, "Trick or..." and can't remember the rest.

#4

By the end of the night, you have a bag full of restraining orders.

#3

You have to carefully choose a costume that won't dislodge your hairpiece.

#2

You're the only Power Ranger in the neighborhood with a walker.

#1

You avoid going to houses where your ex-wives live.



Source: Answers Yahoo.com