



### What is the flu?

The flu (influenza) is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs that is caused by influenza virus. The flu can spread from person to person. Most people with flu are sick for about a week, but then feel better. However, some people (especially young children, pregnant women, older people, and people with chronic health problems) can get very sick and some can die.

### What is 2009 H1N1 flu?

2009 H1N1 flu is a new influenza virus that behaves like any other flu virus and is spreading worldwide among people. This new virus was called "swine flu" at first because it has pieces of flu viruses found in pigs in the past. This flu season the new virus may cause many more people to get sick than during a regular flu season.

### What flu vaccines do I need?

This year there will be two different vaccines (shots) for flu. One of these vaccines will be to provide protection against regular **Seasonal Flu** and will be similar to the annual flu vaccine that many people have been receiving for years. The current CDC recommendation is that everyone get their seasonal flu vaccine as early as possible beginning in September.

The second vaccine is expected to be available sometime later in the fall or winter and will provide protection against the **2009 H1N1 Flu**. ARC will not receive the H1N1 vaccine through the usual private sector channels, but will be waiting for its distribution from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). DSHS will distribute the vaccine according to CDC requirements and to the quantity of vaccine produced. Please check the ARC website for updates about this year's flu season, scheduled flu clinics, and DSHS H1N1 vaccine distribution to ARC.

### How can I help prevent the spread of seasonal and H1N1 flu?

Flu vaccines, once administered, are not effective for about two weeks. Even if you have received your vaccine(s) it is important that you protect yourself from exposure to infectious illnesses, including the flu. Some simple but effective steps you can take are listed below:

- Wash hands frequently.
- Sneeze and/or cough into a facial tissue (discard promptly) or into your sleeve.
- Wear a surgical mask if you have a cough or if others around you have a cough.
- During any outbreak of illness, avoid being in public as much as possible to minimize exposure.
- Stay fever-free for at least 24-hours before going back to work or school.

### When can I go back to school or work if I have the seasonal or 2009 H1N1 flu?

Stay home. Avoid traveling and going to work or school for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, except to get medical care or for other necessities.