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What People Can Do to Prevent and
Contain the Novel H1N1 Influenza Virus:

KEY MESSAGES FOR COMMUNICATORS

This publication was produced by the AI.COMM project, which is operated by AED. AI.COMM is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development under contract number GHS-I-00-03-00036, Task Order 3. This publication does not necessarily represent the views of USAID or the U.S. Government.

www.pandemicpreparedness.org
www.avianflu.aed.org

September 2009

MESSAGES ON NON-PHARMACEUTICAL INTERVENTIONS

Non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI) to prevent and contain the spread of the novel H1N1 influenza virus can be divided into two major categories: 1) sanitation and hygiene (e.g., hand washing, sneezing etiquette), and 2) social distancing (e.g., isolation of the sick, quarantine). These practices then are aggregated into specific activities that people can undertake to prevent the spread of novel H1N1 influenza virus. Although the basic information does not change from audience to audience, the context may. For example, the message specifics for an educator or caregiver of a school child may be more about relationships in the classroom or not coming to school but still relates to hygiene and sanitation. Caregivers with sick family members at home also need to focus on hygiene and sanitation, but specifically related to home-based care.

To assist communicators with how to talk about NPI, or good practices to reduce the virus outbreaks, the following pages provide tables of the various NPI, or desired practices, and sample messages for each desired practice and audience. By adapting these practices at the individual and household levels, communities can reduce the number of people getting sick. Because vaccines and antiviral medicines – also known as pharmaceutical interventions – in some areas may not be available or be available in limited supply, these NPI will likely be the most effective and practical measures to take.

Please note: Messages addressing pharmaceutical interventions, such as antiviral medicines and vaccines, are provided in a separate table at the end of this document.

AUDIENCE: ALL AUDIENCES/ GENERAL PUBLIC

Desired Practice/NPI	SAMPLE MESSAGES
<p>Know the symptoms of novel H1N1 influenza virus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ You might have novel H1N1 influenza virus if you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coughing/sore throat • Fever higher than 38° C • Headache or body aches • Chills • Fatigue • Diarrhea and vomiting (especially in children) • Sneezing or runny/stuffy nose. ■ Most people will have some – not all – of these symptoms. ■ Flu symptoms can be caused by novel H1N1 influenza virus or by another illness, and there is no way to know unless it is officially diagnosed at a health care facility.
<p>Understand how influenza can be spread</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Novel H1N1 influenza virus can be spread by breathing the air when droplets come out of the mouth and nose of a sick person when they are sneezing, coughing, breathing or spitting. ■ Novel H1N1 influenza virus can be spread by touching things – such as cups, telephones or door knobs – that a sick person has touched. ■ Novel H1N1 influenza virus can spread easily in places where there are many people close to each other, such as markets, schools, places of worship, and social gatherings. ■ Novel H1N1 influenza virus can be spread by someone even before they start showing symptoms. ■ A person can spread the virus for several days before they feel sick. You cannot tell who has the virus by looking at them.

<p>Know how to prevent the spread of the novel H1N1 influenza virus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To help stop the spread of novel H1N1 influenza virus, you can do four main things: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wash your hands often with soap and water. 2. Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth or tissue when you sneeze or cough. If you do not have a cloth or tissue, cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow. 3. Keep at least a 2-meter distance from people who are sick. Avoid public places where many people are gathered. 4. Separate those who are ill from other members of the household.
<p>Practice good respiratory etiquette to prevent the spread of novel H1N1 influenza virus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or cloth when you cough or sneeze. If you do not have a tissue or cloth, use the crook of your elbow to cover your cough or sneeze. ■ Wearing a mask, scarf or other piece of cloth over your mouth and nose can limit the spread of novel H1N1 influenza virus. ■ Do not spit in public. If you are sick, this can spread the disease to others.
<p>Frequently wash your hands with soap and water to prevent the spread of novel H1N1 influenza virus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Always wash your hands with soap and water: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before and after preparing food • Before and after eating • Before and after caring for a person who is sick with influenza • After touching something that a sick person has touched • After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose • Before and after using the toilet ■ Washing your hands correctly with soap and water will help to remove the virus. ■ Follow these steps to wash your hands correctly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wet hands with water • Rub soap with hands • Rub the palms together • Rub the back of each hand with the other hand

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash the spaces between all fingers • Wash under your nails • Wash your wrists • Rinse well with water
<p>Practice good hygiene to prevent the spread of novel H1N1 influenza virus</p>	<p>Clean things that are touched by a person with the flu with soap and water. This can be door knobs, lamps, telephones, sinks, tables, linens, and drinking and eating utensils.</p>
<p>To help reduce the transmission of novel H1N1 influenza virus, avoid places where large groups of people gather</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ During an outbreak, stay at home and avoid places where you could catch the illness from others. ■ During an outbreak, avoid crowded public transportation. Travel during off-peak hours if possible. ■ Avoid public gatherings where you could become exposed to novel H1N1 influenza virus, such as church, funerals, and sporting events. ■ If possible, stay home from work, school and errands when you have any symptoms of novel H1N1 influenza virus. ■ Keep a distance of more than 2 meters away from others, especially if you are sick. ■ If you must go out in public during an outbreak, protect yourself by wearing a mask or cloth over your mouth and nose and keeping at least 2 meters away from others. ■ If possible, have only one person from the household go to the market or on other errands.
<p>Keep updated on developments in novel H1N1 influenza virus and your community's response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pay attention to announcements from local leaders, radio, television, or hotlines to keep up to date on what actions you should take. ■ Information is also available at www.pandemicpreparedness.org, www.who.int and www.cdc.gov. ■ Listen for updates on public events that are cancelled or schools that are closed.

AUDIENCE: CAREGIVERS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE SICK WITH NOVEL H1N1 INFLUENZA VIRUS

Desired Practice/NPI	SAMPLE MESSAGES
<p>Separate those who are ill from others in the household</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create a separate space to take care of the sick person. This should be at least 2 meters away from other people. ■ Have only one person in the family tend to the sick person to prevent others in the household from getting sick. ■ Limit visitors to the sick person. ■ The person chosen to care for the person with novel H1N1 influenza virus should ideally be healthy and not have medical conditions that would put him or her at risk for severe influenza disease. ■ Pregnant women should not care for those who are sick with novel H1N1 influenza virus.
<p>If you are caring for someone who is sick, protect yourself from becoming ill</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Wear a mask or cloth over your mouth and nose when you are close to the sick person to prevent getting the virus. ■ Wash your hands with soap and water before and after caring for the sick person. ■ Remind the sick person to cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and to wash their hands with soap and water often – especially after coughing or sneezing. ■ Put used tissues in a bag or waste container near the bed. Dispose of them with other household waste when the container is full. Or, if the sick person uses a cloth for sneezes and coughs, make sure it is regularly washed. ■ If possible, have the sick person wear a mask over their mouth and nose. If masks are not available, the sick person should cover their nose and mouth with a cloth when within 2 meters of others.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Try to use different eating and drinking utensils, towels, sheets, and blankets for the sick person and different ones for others in the household.
<p>If you are sick, stay at home and rest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If you are showing symptoms of the flu, stay at home and rest. Do not go to work or school, and avoid public gatherings. ■ Rest in a separate room or area for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone. Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine. ■ Stay at least 2 meters away from other people. ■ Cover your mouth and nose with a mask or cloth when you are near other people to help prevent the spread of disease. ■ If you have novel H1N1 influenza virus and must leave your home, wear a mask or cloth over your mouth and nose.
<p>Know how to provide home-based care for those who have novel H1N1 influenza virus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Know what to do if you think you or someone else have novel H1N1 influenza virus. ■ If you are caring for someone with novel H1N1 influenza virus, make sure that they rest and keep them as comfortable as possible. ■ Keep people with novel H1N1 influenza virus in a separate room or area that is away from others.
<p>Know how to recognize and treat dehydration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Avoid dehydration by giving the sick person enough to drink and eat while they are ill. ■ Watch for signs of dehydration, such as weakness or unresponsiveness, dry mouth and tongue, decreased amount of urine, or dark urine. ■ You can check for dehydration by lightly pinching some skin on the belly of a child or the upper chest of an adult, then let go. If the person has enough fluid, the skin will flatten out again right away. If the person is dehydrated, the skin will stay stretched up in the shape of the pinch for a few seconds. ■ If the person is very weak or shows signs of dehydration, give oral rehydration solution according to instructions on the packet, or clear drinks available in the home.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Watch for an increase in urination, a lighter color of the urine and improvement in the patient’s overall condition. These are signs that the increased fluids are working. ■ Babies who are breast-fed and vomiting can continue to nurse. ■ Women who are breastfeeding and have symptoms of influenza should continue to nurse their babies unless they are told otherwise by their health care providers.
Know how to treat fever and aches and pains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fever is a sign that the body is fighting the infection. It will go away as the person is getting better. ■ Keep the sick person in clean, dry and loose clothing. ■ If the person is chilled, cover him with a blanket. ■ If the person is very hot, loosen his clothing. ■ If you have it, give medicine such as ibuprofen, paracetamol, or acetaminophen every six hours. ■ Sponging with lukewarm water may lower the sick person’s temperature, but only during the period of sponging. Do not sponge with alcohol. ■ Do not use aspirin in children or teenagers with influenza because it can cause Reye’s syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
Know how to treat a sore throat or cough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To soothe a sore throat, gargle with hot salt water or drink hot tea or hot water. ■ If you have it, use ibuprofen or acetaminophen to treat the sore throat pain.
Know how to treat chills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If the sick person has chills, keep them as warm as possible.
Know how to treat nasal/sinus/ear congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To treat congestion, have the sick person breathe in the steam from a pot of hot water. If you have it, add a few drops of eucalyptus oil to help clear congestion.
Know how to treat nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Watch for signs of dehydration, such as weakness or unresponsiveness, dry mouth and tongue, or decreased amount of urine.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Give the sick person small amounts of fluids frequently to prevent dehydration, even if they do not feel thirsty. ■ If the sick person is dehydrated, give sips or spoonfuls of fluids frequently over a four-hour period. Watch for an increase in urination, a lighter color of the urine and improvement in the patient’s overall condition. These are signs that the increased fluids are working. ■ If the sick person is vomiting, do not give them any fluid or food for at least one hour. Let the stomach rest. After that, offer water in very small amounts until the person can drink more. ■ If the sick person is not eating solid foods, give them fluids that contain sugars and salts, such as oral rehydration solution (ORS), broths or soups. ■ Babies who are breast-fed and vomiting can continue to nurse
<p>Go to a health care facility only if you have severe health problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Go to a health care facility only if you have severe problems such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty breathing • Chest pain • Coughing up blood • Lips or skin turning blue • Severe vomiting or diarrhea • Not waking up • Confusion (such as not recognizing family or friends) • Seizures or shaking that cannot be controlled. ■ Always bring a sick infant younger than 2 months that refuses to feed to the health care facility. ■ For parents with a young child who is ill, seek medical care if a child has fast or labored breathing, continuing fever, or convulsions (seizures). ■ If you live in an area where malaria is common, you should always go to the health care facility if you have a fever.

AUDIENCE: HIGH-RISK GROUPS

(elderly people, pregnant women, people with pre-existing illnesses)

Desired Practice/NPI	SAMPLE MESSAGES
Know which types of people are most at risk of getting pandemic influenza	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Anyone, even young, healthy people, can get novel H1N1 influenza virus.■ Some people are at greater risk for illness and death from novel H1N1 influenza virus, such as people who already have a health problem.■ Older people, young children and pregnant women are at higher risk of major health problems related to novel H1N1 influenza virus.■ Pregnant women should avoid contact with all sick people during a pandemic to protect their babies and themselves.■ People with certain medical conditions – such as tuberculosis or other lung diseases, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, heart problems, and kidney disease – are at higher risk of getting the novel H1N1 influenza virus.
Pregnant women should avoid situations where they could be exposed to novel H1N1 influenza virus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ There is a higher risk of serious complications in women who are pregnant and infected with novel H1N1 influenza virus, especially in the second and third trimesters.■ Pregnant women should avoid situations where they could be exposed to novel H1N1 influenza virus, such as large social gatherings.■ Pregnant women who work in health care facilities should try to avoid patients with known or suspected novel H1N1 influenza virus infection. If pregnant health care workers cannot avoid patients with H1N1, they should always cover their nose and mouth with a mask.■ In areas where H1N1 influenza is widespread, pregnant women should pay attention to symptoms of influenza-

	<p>like illness and tell their health care provider if they suspect they might have the novel H1N1 influenza virus.</p>
<p>People with HIV and other serious illnesses (such as tuberculosis or heart problems) should avoid situations where they could be exposed to novel H1N1 influenza virus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ People with existing illnesses should avoid places where they could be exposed to novel H1N1 influenza virus. ■ If you are sick, stay home and keep away from others as much as possible to avoid making others sick. ■ If you need to go out in public, cover your mouth and nose with a mask or cloth, and cover. ■ If you are currently taking medications for your pre-existing illness, continue to take them and follow your doctor's orders. ■ If you have HIV or AIDS and are taking medicines to prevent infections, continue with your prescribed treatment and follow the advice of your health care provider to keep your immune system healthy.

AUDIENCE: PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN AREAS WITH AVIAN INFLUENZA OUTBREAKS OR WORK WITH POULTRY

Desired Practice/NPI	SAMPLE MESSAGES
<p>People who live in areas with avian influenza (H5N1 virus) outbreaks should pay special attention when they have flu symptoms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ If you live in an area with avian influenza outbreaks and you have flu symptoms, you should visit your health care facility to find out if you have avian influenza. The avian flu virus (H5N1) has been shown to be more severe in people than novel H1N1 influenza virus so far.■ You will not be able to tell the difference between avian flu and novel H1N1 influenza virus without medical help.■ You can become infected with novel H1N1 influenza virus without being in contact with birds, pigs or any other animals. It is spread from person-to-person.■ Continue to take steps to prevent outbreaks of avian flu, such as keeping the farmyard clean, keeping poultry separated from other animals, and washing your hands with soap and water before and after contact with poultry.

AUDIENCE: HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Desired Practice/NPI	SAMPLE MESSAGES
<p>Health care workers should take special precautions to protect themselves from novel H1N1 influenza virus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ During an outbreak of novel H1N1 influenza virus, health care workers should treat all patients who arrive at their facility with flu-like symptoms as having novel H1N1 influenza virus and protect themselves.■ Health care workers should wear face masks over their nose and mouth when they are caring for patients with flu-like symptoms.■ Have patients with flu-like symptoms wear a mask or cloth over their nose and mouth.■ If possible, place patients with flu-like symptoms in a room separate from other patients, or at least 2 meters away from others.■ Wash your hands with soap and water before and after caring for the sick person.■ Remind the sick person to cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and to wash their hands with soap and water often – especially after coughing or sneezing.■ Dispose of used tissues along with other medical waste, away from people.■ Health workers should regularly clean areas that have come in contact with sick patients.

AUDIENCE: EDUCATORS/SCHOOL WORKERS

Desired Practice/NPI	SAMPLE MESSAGES
<p>School workers and students should cooperate with decisions to close schools or any other decisions made by school administrators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Encourage students and staff to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay home when they are sick.• Wash hands frequently with soap and water.• Cover their noses and mouths with a tissue or cloth when they cough or sneeze – or use the crook of their arm if no tissue is available.■ Students and school workers who have flu symptoms should stay in a room separate from others until they can be sent home. If possible, wear a mask, and have those who care for ill students and staff wear a mask.■ Educators/school workers and students with flu symptoms should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines.■ School staff should regularly clean areas that students and staff touch often with the cleaners they typically use. Special cleaning with bleach and other non-detergent-based cleaners is not necessary.

AUDIENCE: TRAVELLERS

Desired Practice/NPI	SAMPLE MESSAGES
If you are travelling to an area with outbreaks of novel H1N1 influenza virus, take precautions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ If possible, avoid travelling to places that have an outbreak of novel H1N1 influenza virus.■ If you have any symptoms of novel H1N1 influenza virus, do not travel. Stay at home.■ If you are travelling to areas with reported novel H1N1 influenza virus:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observe and follow the rules from the local health authorities• Expect additional health screening procedures from the airport• Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or cloth when coughing or sneezing, and wash your hands often with soap and water• Keep at least 2 meters away from others when you are in public places.

MESSAGES ON PHARMACEUTICAL INTERVENTIONS

**AUDIENCE: ALL AUDIENCES/
GENERAL PUBLIC**

Desired Practice/NPI	SAMPLE MESSAGES
<p>Know which antiviral medications can be used for the novel H1N1 influenza virus and when they can be used</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are two drugs that have been found to reduce the symptoms of novel H1N1 influenza virus, and to reduce the time people are sick. They are: oseltamivir and zanamivir. ■ Only health care providers can decide whether you should be taking antiviral medicines for novel H1N1 influenza virus. ■ People should not take antiviral medicines unless they are told by a health care provider. ■ Do not worry if you cannot obtain an antiviral medicine. So far most people who have novel H1N1 influenza virus have recovered without antiviral treatment. ■ People with severe illness or whose condition begins to deteriorate should receive oseltamivir as soon as possible.
<p>Know how and when vaccines for novel H1N1 influenza virus will be used</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vaccines for the novel H1N1 influenza virus have been developed and manufactured, and may be available in limited quantities for those people that are most at risk.

These include health care workers, pregnant women and people with chronic illnesses.

- Vaccines developed for the regular, seasonal influenza virus will not offer much protection against the novel H1N1 influenza virus.
- National health authorities will decide how to distribute vaccines for the novel H1N1 influenza virus under their national vaccination campaigns.
- When the novel H1N1 influenza virus vaccine first becomes available, the demand for it will probably be greater than the supply.
- Do not worry if you cannot obtain the novel H1N1 influenza virus vaccine. Other practices such as regular hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying away from people who are sick can also be effective to prevent getting the novel H1N1 influenza virus.

AUDIENCE: HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Desired Practice/NPI	SAMPLE MESSAGES
Health care workers should be vaccinated against the novel H1N1 influenza virus if it is available to them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ If possible, health care workers should be immunized against the novel H1N1 influenza virus because they will have the most contact with people who are ill with the virus.■ If a novel H1N1 influenza virus vaccine is not available, health care workers should treat all patients who arrive at their facility with flu-like symptoms as having novel H1N1 influenza virus and take precautions to protect themselves. <p><i>(See NPI actions in the first part of the document.)</i></p>

