

**Minnesota Department of Health**

October 21, 2009

**Minnesota FluLine offers support and treatment options for people with possible symptoms of influenza**

***Minnesotans with flu symptoms can call toll-free line at 1-866-259-4655***

A new phone-based service is now available for Minnesotans who think they may have the flu.

Beginning today, October 21, people with possible flu symptoms can call the Minnesota FluLine (MN FluLine) at 1-866-259-4655 for information and treatment options. Professionals will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. People with limited English skills will be connected with an interpreter. There is no charge for the call.

Callers with flu symptoms will be connected with a participating nurse at MN FluLine, or a nurse at a triage line operated by their own provider network or health plan. The nurses will evaluate the health concerns of callers and discuss treatment options, using consistent criteria to determine which treatment option is most appropriate for each individual.

Possible treatment options can include rest and fluids at home, a prescription for an antiviral medication, or medical evaluation in a clinic or hospital.

The Minnesota FluLine was created specifically to meet the needs of people with possible symptoms of the flu. By definition, those symptoms include a fever of 100 degrees or more, along with a cough or sore throat. Flu symptoms can also include runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and/or fatigue. In some cases, symptoms of novel H1N1 influenza can also include vomiting and diarrhea in addition to respiratory symptoms.

In most cases, people can recover from the flu at home without needing to visit a health care provider. Those who may be at highest risk for complications from the flu include children under two years of age, people 65 years of age or older, pregnant women, and people with underlying medical conditions.

People who need information about the flu, but do not have symptoms, are encouraged to visit the flu information page on the MDH Web site at [www.mdhflu.com](http://www.mdhflu.com). The Web site offers a wide range of information and resources, including an interactive flu shot clinic finder.

**-MDH-**

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