

## A Health and Safety Bulletin from

# UI HealthWorks and WORKSAFE IOWA

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### H1N1 Influenza

Seasonal influenza typically strikes a limited number of people, and a vaccine is prepared in advance to match the viruses identified as most likely to be circulating. A pandemic, however, is a worldwide outbreak of a new strain of virus to which people may not have immunity in the early phases, so the disease spreads rapidly.

First detected in April 2009, H1N1 influenza had by mid-May caused 5,123 cases of illness and 5 deaths in the US. Because it appears to be of swine origin, it was called "swine flu" in the early intensive media coverage, although concerns were quickly expressed that this name fuels a misconception that eating pork is unsafe. Now H1N1 is a human-to-human virus, requiring no contact with swine, and the CDC believes it spreads like other flu viruses, mainly through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick. How severe the H1N1 outbreak will be is unclear although health officials worry that cases will increase and that mutation of the virus could produce a more severe outbreak later in the year.

Scientists continue to recommend hand washing as the single most important way to combat contagion. Business operations that require close contact with fellow employees and the public, such as health care, face special considerations in preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) -**

**H1N1 Flu Resources for Businesses and Employers - [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/business/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/business/)**

**H1N1 Flu Clinical and Public Health Guidance - [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/)**

**NIOSH (Occupational Health Issues Associated with H1N1 Influenza Virus) - [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/h1n1flu/)**

**OSHA (Classifying Employee Exposure) - [www.osha.gov/Publications/influenza\\_pandemic.html#classifying\\_exposure](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/influenza_pandemic.html#classifying_exposure)**

### MSD Increase in 3 Industry Sectors

The rate of occupational musculoskeletal disorders in private industry decreased between 2003 and 2007. However, three industry sectors reported rates that exceeded the overall private industry averages by at least 25%: Transportation and Warehousing, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Construction.

**NIOSH (e-news) - [www.cdc.gov/niosh/enews/enewsv7n1chart.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/enews/enewsv7n1chart.html)**

### Nanoparticles—The Future is Now

"Do occupational exposures to engineered nanoparticles pose an unintended risk of adverse health effects?" It's not a theoretical question that we have the luxury of debating for years. Scientific recommendations regarding safety and health in the manufacturing and industrial use of nanomaterials are available as at least "interim guidance."

**NIOSH Update - [www.cdc.gov/niosh/updates/upd-02-13-09.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/updates/upd-02-13-09.html)**

### That Constant Pressure

For resources on handling stress, who better to consult than the American Institute of Stress? The AIS was established in 1978 at the request of Hans Selye, the "father" of the concept of stress (among other founding members were Linus Pauling, Herbert Benson, and Bob Hope). The most important point for stressed workers to understand is that the problem is not the stimulus but their reaction to the stimulus.

**American Institute of Stress (Job Stress) - [www.stress.org/job.htm](http://www.stress.org/job.htm)**

UI HealthWorks is a member of the WORKSAFE IOWA Occupational Medicine Associate Network, the only university-affiliated network of occupational health providers. WORKSAFE IOWA is an outreach program of the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health in the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa ([www.public-health.uiowa.edu/worksafe](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/worksafe)).