

Helpful Hints to Try to Prevent H1N1

The only portals of entry are the nostrils and mouth/throat. In a global epidemic of this nature, it's almost impossible to avoid coming into contact with H1N1 in spite of all precautions. Contact with H1N1 is not so much of a problem as proliferation is.

While you are still healthy and not showing any symptoms of H1N1 infection, in order to prevent proliferation, aggravation of symptoms and development of secondary infections, some very simple steps, not fully highlighted in most official communications, can be practiced.

Frequent hand-washing (well highlighted in all official communications)

2. "Hands-off-the-face" approach. Resist all temptations to touch any part of the face (unless you want to eat or bathe)

"Gargle twice a day with warm salt water (use Listerine if you don't trust salt). H1N1 takes 2-3 days after initial infection in the throat/nasal cavity to proliferate and show characteristic symptoms. Simple gargling prevents proliferation. In a way, gargling with salt water has the same effect on a healthy individual that Tamiflu has on an infected one. Don't underestimate this simple, inexpensive and powerful preventative method.

4. Similar to 3 above, "clean your nostrils at least once every day with warm salt water." Blowing the nose hard once a day and swabbing both nostrils with cotton swabs dipped in warm salt water is very effective in bringing down viral population.
5. "Boost your natural immunity with foods that are rich in Vitamin C." If you have to supplement with Vitamin C tablets, make sure that it also has Zinc to boost absorption.
6. "Drink as much of warm liquids (tea, coffee, etc.) as you can. "Drinking warm liquids has the same effect as gargling, but in the reverse direction. They wash off proliferating viruses from the throat into the stomach where they cannot survive, proliferate or do any harm.

Dr. Vinay HGoyal — presently heading our Nuclear Medicine Department and Thyroid clinic at Riddhivinayak Cardiac and Critical Centre.