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Flu Frequently Asked Questions for Employees

Q: How can I reduce my risk of catching the H1N1 (swine flu)?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner if soap and water are not available. Wash your hands after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- Avoid touching your nose, mouth and eyes as these are common sources for spreading germs.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough and sneeze into your elbow.
- Clean frequently touched, common surfaces, such as telephones and doorknobs. The flu virus can live on hard surfaces up to eight hours.
- Do not use other workers' phones, offices or work equipment.
- If you are at higher risk for H1N1 (swine flu) complications, get the H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine when it becomes available. People at higher risk of complications include:
 - Pregnant women
 - Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months
 - Healthcare and emergency medical personnel
 - All people from ages 6 months through 24 years
 - People with chronic conditions (e.g., asthma, heart disease or diabetes)

If you have questions about how the H1N1 (swine flu) vaccination will be paid (covered), please call our Customer Service department at the number on your member identification card.

- Get vaccinated against seasonal flu. The H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine *is not* intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccination.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle through rest, diet, exercise and relaxation.

Q: What should be done if I or a family member has H1N1 (swine flu)?

- It will be very hard to tell whether someone who is sick has H1N1 (swine flu) **or** the seasonal influenza so you should plan to respond in the same manner if flu symptoms are present.
- Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home. Have the following items on hand: fever-reducing medicines that contain acetaminophen or ibuprofen, alcohol-based hand cleaners and tissues and, if applicable, medicines appropriate for your children.
- Stay home except to get medical care. Symptoms of flu include fever (100 degrees F or 38 degrees C) and cough or sore throat. Symptoms of flu can also include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea and vomiting. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that sick workers stay home if they are sick with a flu-like illness until at least 24 hours **after** they are free of fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
- Have a plan in place to care for sick household members or for children if schools or child care programs close.
- You do not need to stay home from work if a household member is sick, but be sure to monitor yourself for signs of illness.
- To find out more about the flu and how to prepare, go to flu.gov or call 800/CDC-INFO (800/232-4636).