

## CDC Says No to Swine Flu Parties

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Before the invention and wide-spread use of vaccines for a number of diseases it was common for families and groups of friends to hold “pox parties”. The idea behind a pox party was to expose children to another child who had chickenpox or measles or mumps, hoping that they will build immunity from the disease by being intentionally exposed to the viruses.

This idea has taken hold in regards to the current H1N1 outbreak. “Swine flu parties” are gatherings during which people have close contact with a person who has H1N1 flu in order to become infected with the virus. The intent is to become infected with what for many people has been a mild disease, in the hope of having natural immunity to the H1N1 virus that might circulate later and cause more severe disease.

**CDC does not recommend “swine flu parties” as a way to protect against H1N1 in the future.** While the disease seen in the current outbreak has been mild for many people, it has been severe and even fatal for others. There is no way to predict with any certainty what the outcome will be for an individual or, equally important, for others to whom the intentionally infected person may spread the virus to.

CDC recommends that people with H1N1 flu avoid contact with others as much as possible. They should stay home from work or school for 7 days after the onset of illness or until at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved, whichever is longer.

There are currently efforts underway to create a vaccine for H1N1 for future outbreaks.

A flu shot remains the best form of protection from seasonal flu.