



What is Swine Flu?

Swine Flu (Influenza A H1N1) is a respiratory disease caused by type A influenza viruses (H1N1), usually found in pigs. People do not normally get Swine Flu, but human infections can and do happen.

How is Swine Flu spread?

Swine Flu is contagious and can be spread from person to person. Respiratory droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze can spread the flu virus through the air. Infected people may be contagious beginning one day before symptoms develop and should be considered contagious as long as they are symptomatic and up to seven or more days after becoming sick. This means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

In addition, the flu virus is reported to remain viable on environmental surfaces for up to two days or more on doorknobs, tables, and desks. When a person touches something that is contaminated with the flu virus, such as a desk or countertop, and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth before washing their hands, they can be exposed to the flu virus. Swine flu is not transmitted from eating pork or pork products.

What are the symptoms of Swine Flu?

The symptoms of Swine Flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, body aches, headaches, chills, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting and fatigue. Additional symptoms that may require urgent medical attention include fast breathing or trouble breathing, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen; sudden dizziness; confusion; severe or persistent vomiting. Like seasonal flu, Swine Flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions. If you live in an area where Swine Flu cases have been identified and become ill with influenza-type symptoms, contact your healthcare provider.

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Am I protected from the Swine Flu if I receive a flu vaccine this season?

Currently there is no vaccine for Swine Flu. Antiviral drugs are available that may make your illness milder and may prevent serious flu complications. Antiviral drugs work best if started within two days of getting symptoms. Your healthcare provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.

What can be done to prevent Swine Flu?

There are simple actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illness like influenza:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- **WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN** with soap and warm water (for at least 20 seconds), especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth – this is how germs are spread.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that you stay at home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

What does the “Influenza Alert Phase” mean?

The World Health Organization (WHO) established a six year plan for preparing and responding to an influenza type pandemic. As of April 29, 2009, the alert phase was set to “five”, meaning that the Swine Flu is transmitting person to person in at least two countries. The WHO plan calls for increased health surveillance and communication regarding procedures to prevent transmission of the disease as well as containment measures to delay or limit the spread of infection.

What is the status of the influenza outbreak at this time?

As of April 29, 2009, there have been 91 cases of laboratory confirmed human swine flu in 10 US states. There are also confirmed cases in six other countries including Mexico, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Israel, and Spain.

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