

## Swine Influenza: What You Can Do to Stay Healthy

### What is swine flu?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but in the past, this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people.

### What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu in people?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu in humans and may include:

- Fever (greater than 100°F or 37.8°C)
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Stuffy nose
- Chills
- Headache and body aches
- Fatigue

Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. Severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

### What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- *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 water,* especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- *Try to avoid close contact with sick people.*

### What should I do if I get sick?

If you live in areas where swine influenza cases have been identified and become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you may want to contact their health care provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.

*If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.*

### Are there medicines to treat swine flu?

Yes. CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir (**Tamiflu**) or zanamivir (**Relenza**) for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with these swine influenza viruses.

For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (**within 2 days of symptoms**).

( Source: CDC website, <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu> accessed April 27, 2009 )

## **Warning Signs:**

If you become ill and experience any of the following **warning signs**, seek emergency medical care.

In **children** emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In **adults**, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

## **How does swine flu spread?**

Spread of this swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

## **How can someone with the flu infect someone else?**

Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick. That 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.

## **How long can an infected person spread swine flu to others?**

People with swine influenza virus infection should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possible for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

## **Can I get swine influenza from eating or preparing pork?**

No. Swine influenza viruses are not spread by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

## **Contact CDC:**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1600 Clifton Rd., Atlanta, GA 30333

**Toll-free:** 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) TTY: (888) 232-6348

Email: [cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov)

CDC Swine Influenza Website, <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu>