



H1N1 (Swine) FLU

Facts and Prevention Tips

What is it?

H1N1 (Swine) Flu is an influenza A virus that likely made the “animal to human jump” in Mexico in the late winter/early spring of 2009. Human-to-human transmission is occurring worldwide. Severity of illness is unclear; there have been reports from moderate to severe across many different age groups. There is little or NO human immunity, which means that no one has built up an immunity to this strain of flu, increasing the risk of even healthy people.

Can people catch the H1N1 (Swine-origin) flu from eating pork?

NO! The H1N1 flu virus is not transmitted by food. You can NOT get this influenza from eating or preparing pork products.

Is the H1N1 swine flu virus the same as human H1N1 viruses?

No. The H1N1 swine flu viruses are very different from human H1N1 viruses and, therefore, vaccines for human seasonal flu would not provide protection from H1N1 swine flu viruses.

How does swine flu spread?

Influenza viruses can be directly transmitted from pigs to people and from people to pigs. Human infection with flu viruses from pigs are most likely to occur when people are in close proximity to infected pigs, such as in pig barns and livestock exhibits housing pigs at fairs. Human-to-human transmission of swine flu can also occur. This is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu occurs in people, which is mainly person-to-person transmission through coughing or sneezing of people infected with the influenza virus. People may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it (the virus can live on hard surfaces for days!) and then touching their mouth or nose.

What are the symptoms of swine flu in humans?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are expected to be similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza. Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness and at times can lead to death. The flu is different from a cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly and may include these symptoms: fever (usually high), headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches & stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

How is it treated?

If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious influenza complications. Influenza antiviral drugs work best when started soon after illness onset (within two days), but treatment with antiviral drugs should still be considered after 48 hours of symptom onset, particularly for hospitalized patients or people at high risk for influenza-related complications. CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) or zanamivir (Relenza®) for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with swine influenza viruses.

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Protecting Your Family's Health

- > Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, too.
- > Stay home when you are sick or have flu symptoms.
- > Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze and wash hands immediately!
- > Wash your hands often. Use hand sanitizers.
- > Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- > Get plenty of sleep, eat right and drink plenty of fluids.