



Quick Facts about Swine Flu

What is swine flu?

H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in pigs.

Are there human infections with swine flu in the U.S.?

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report more than 890 confirmed cases of swine flu in more than 40 states. More than 1,500 cases have been reported, worldwide. Swine flu has been found to be very contagious.

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

Fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Swine flu may worsen existing conditions.

How does swine flu spread?

It spreads through the tiny particles associated with coughing or sneezing or when people touch something with flu viruses on it and then touch their mouth or nose. Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick.

What should I do to keep from getting the flu?

Wash your hands. Try to stay in good general health, and get plenty of sleep. Be physically active, and manage your stress; drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Try not touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Are there medicines to treat swine flu?

CDC recommends the use of antiviral medications. These drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications.

How long can viruses live outside the body?

We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces. Hand washing will help you reduce the chance of infection.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine available. Take these everyday steps;

- 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, and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. If you get sick, CDC recommends that you stay home from and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

What is the best way to keep from spreading the virus through coughing or sneezing?

Do not go to work or school if ill. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Put your used tissue in the waste basket. Then, clean your hands.

What is the best technique for washing my hands to avoid getting the flu?

Wash with soap and water for 15-20 seconds. You may also use alcohol-based sanitizers.

What should I do if I get sick?

You may want to contact your doctor, especially if you child is:

- Breathing quickly or having trouble breathing
- Has bluish skin color or is not drinking enough fluids
- Is not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Improving but then the fever returns and/or the cough worsens
- Has a 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 or confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Can I get swine influenza from eating or preparing pork?

No. Swine influenza viruses are not spread by food.

Are there restrictions on travel?

Check these sites for updates: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx> or <http://www.state.gov/>

Information for this document comes from the Maine CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>