

Public Health Fact Sheet

Swine Flu



What is swine flu?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that cause regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen.

What are the symptoms of the flu?

Symptoms of swine flu are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include:

fever	cough	runny or stuffy nose	chills
headache	sore throat	muscle aches	fatigue

Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea

How does the 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 long is a person contagious?

Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and 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.

Is there a treatment for swine flu?

Yes. CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with these swine influenza viruses. Antiviral 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. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within 2 days of symptoms).

How can swine flu be prevented?

There is no vaccine available right now to protect humans 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:

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people whenever possible.
- If you get sick with influenza, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.

Can I get swine flu from eating or preparing pork?

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