



Swine Flu

(PUBLIC HANDOUT)

What is Swine Flu?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus that regularly causes outbreaks of flu in pigs. Outbreaks of swine flu happen regularly in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Most commonly, human cases of swine flu happen in people who are around pigs but it is possible for swine flu viruses to spread from person to person also.

Can humans catch swine flu?

Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans. However, occasional human infections with swine flu have occurred. Most commonly, these cases occur in persons with direct exposure to pigs (e.g. children near pigs at a fair or workers in the swine industry). A person can also get swine flu by coming in contact with another person who has swine flu.

Is Swine Flu contagious?

CDC has determined that this virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, it is not known how easily the virus spreads between people.

How serious is Swine Flu?

Like seasonal flu, swine flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe.

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 flu and include fever, tiredness, lack of appetite and coughing. Some people with swine flu also have reported runny nose, body aches, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Can people catch swine flu from eating pork?

No. Swine flu viruses are not transmitted by food. You cannot get swine flu from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled, cooked pork and pork products is safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F kills the swine flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses.



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How can human infections with swine flu be diagnosed?

To diagnose swine flu A infection, a respiratory specimen would generally need to be collected within the first 4 to 5 days of illness. However, some persons, especially children, may shed virus for 10 days or longer. Identification as a swine flu A virus requires sending the specimen to CDC for laboratory testing.

What medications are available to treat swine flu infections in humans?

CDC recommends the use of Tamiflu or Relenza for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with these swine flu viruses. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid, or inhalers) 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 symptom onset).

What can I do to prevent 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 can cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Things you can do to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective. Make sure that it is at least 60% alcohol.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.

If I had a flu shot for this past flu season, will it protect me?

No, the swine flu is a new virus and was not included in the 2008-2009 seasonal flu vaccine. It is not likely the 2008-2009 seasonal flu vaccine provides any sort of protection against infection with swine flu. However, the Cumberland and Salem Health Departments does recommend that persons receive the flu shot annually to protect against seasonal flu.



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What should I do if I get sick?

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. Also, make sure you cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your shirt sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

What are some signs that emergency medical attention is needed?

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

Where can I get more information on Swine Flu?

The CDC website will be providing daily updates regarding the status of the swine flu investigation in the US. They also have information posted such as questions and answers regarding swine flu. The web address is

http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/key_facts.htm