

Swine Flu: What You Need to Know

Swine flu is a respiratory disease of pigs that doesn't normally impact humans. However, it is contagious and is currently spreading from human to human. This typically occurs the same way as seasonal flu: by coming in contact with infected people who are coughing or sneezing.

In the past, 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.

Protecting Self and Community

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu.

However, there are everyday actions people can take to prevent the spread of germs such as:

- Covering nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Washing hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing
- Using alcohol-based hand cleaners
- Trying to avoid close contact with sick people
- If feeling ill, encourage and support students and employees to stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them

Treating Swine Flu

There may not be a vaccine for swine flu, but there are medications to treat patients who fall ill. There are four different antiviral drugs that are licensed in the U.S. for the treatment of influenza:

- Amantadine
- Rimantadine
- Oseltamivir
- Zanamivir

For resources on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Ounce of Prevention Campaign go www.cdc.gov/ounceof-prevention/

While most swine influenza viruses have been susceptible to all four drugs, the most recent swine influenza viruses isolated from humans are resistant to amantadine and rimantadine. At this time, the CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with swine influenza viruses.

Source: www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu_you.htm

Emergency Warning Signs

Encourage members of your educational community to always seek emergency medical care if they experience any of the following warning signs:

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

Signs & Symptoms

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include:

- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ Sore throat
- ✓ Body aches
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Chills
- ✓ Fatigue
- ✓ Some reports of diarrhea and vomiting.

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Flu Defined

With all the different kinds of influenza out there, knowing what the differences are can be confusing. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services offers these quick definitions of the most common flu viruses.

- **Swine flu** is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza that regularly causes outbreaks of influenza among pigs. Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans, however, human infections with swine flu do occur, and cases of human-to-human spread of swine flu viruses has been documented.
- **Bird flu/Avian flu (AI)** is caused by influenza viruses that occur naturally among wild birds. Low pathogenic AI is common in birds and causes few problems. Highly pathogenic H5N1 is deadly to domestic fowl, can be transmitted from birds to humans and is deadly to

humans. There is virtually no human immunity and human vaccine availability is very limited.

- **Pandemic flu** is virulent human flu that causes a global outbreak, or pandemic, of serious illness.

Because there is little natural immunity, the disease can spread easily from person to person. Currently, there is no pandemic flu.

- **Seasonal (or common) flu** is a respiratory illness that can be transmitted person to person. Most people have some immunity, and a vaccine is available.

Source: www.avianflu.gov/#

Staying Informed

To keep up to date on the recent swine flu outbreak in the U.S.—including where and how many cases have been identified—go to the CDC's website at: www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm

The Big Question: Eating Pork?

You might hear students and staff asking about the potential of contracting swine flu from eating pork. Everyone should be assured that a person cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

Source: www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu_you.htm

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