



Swine Flu (H1N1 Influenza A)

What Is It & What Does It Mean To Me!

What is swine flu?

“Swine flu” (H1N1 Influenza A Virus) is a respiratory illness which originated in pigs. Human infections of swine flu do not usually occur but, on occasion, human infections will occur if the virus changes (mutates) allowing the illness to be passed from animal to human and ultimately human to human.

Is the swine flu virus contagious?

CDC has determined that this swine influenza A (H1N1) 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. As of April 29th, 2009 there were 64 confirmed cases of swine flu in the United States. One person in the U.S. has died of the illness.

How does swine 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 by people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes. People infected with swine flu may be contagious from 1 day prior until 7 days after the onset of symptoms.

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

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 and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. It is unclear at this point if any particular age group will be more susceptible or suffer more severe symptoms of swine flu.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine available right now to protect humans from swine flu. However, there are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses such as influenza. These steps include:

- 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 (for 15-20 seconds), especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Are there medicines to treat swine flu?

Yes. CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment 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).

Can I get sick with swine flu by eating pork?

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

For additional information- www.cdc.gov/swineflu