

# Swine Influenza (swine flu) Fact Sheet

## What is swine flu?

"Swine flu" is a disease caused by the influenza virus (swine influenza A (H1N1)). This virus normally causes respiratory disease in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but in the past, this transmission has been limited.

From December 2005 through February 2009, a total of 12 human infections with swine influenza were reported from 10 states in the United States. Since March 2009, a number of confirmed human cases of a new strain of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection in the U.S. and internationally have been identified. An investigation into these cases is ongoing.

## Is this 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 not known how easily the virus spreads between people.

## What are the symptoms of Swine Flu?

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

## How can someone with the flu infect someone else?

Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

## Are there medicines to treat 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). Taking these medications is currently only recommended after known exposure to the virus, or for those suspected of having the disease.

## What can I do to protect 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 cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- 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, 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.
- **Can I get swine influenza from eating or preparing pork?**  
No. Swine influenza 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. Always cook to an internal temperature that exceeds 160F.

#### **Key developments as of Sunday, April 27, 2009 on swine flu outbreaks:**

- **Deaths:** 103 suspected, all in Mexico.
- **Sickened:** 1,614 in Mexico, suspected or confirmed; 20 confirmed in U.S.; 13 suspected in New Zealand; 6 confirmed in Canada; 7 suspected in Spain; 1 suspected in France; 1 suspected in Israel.
- **Locations in Mexico:** 17 states, including Mexico City, Mexico State, Veracruz, Oaxaca, Baja California and San Luis Potosi. Some, including Oaxaca, Mexico City and Baja California, have tourist areas, but authorities have not said where in these states the outbreaks occurred.
- **Locations in U.S.:** California, Kansas, New York, Ohio and Texas.
- **Safety measures in Mexico:** In Mexico City, surgical masks being given away on the subway system, public events canceled, schools and public venues closed and church services postponed. President Felipe Calderon has assumed new powers to isolate infected people.
- **Safety measures worldwide:** Airports screening travelers from Mexico for flu symptoms. China, Russia and Taiwan plan to put anyone with symptoms under quarantine. Hong Kong and South Korea warn against travel to Mexico City and three provinces. Italy, Poland and Venezuela advised citizens to postpone travel to affected areas of Mexico and the United States. Travelers at the US / Mexican border are being asked about travel to flu-stricken areas.
- **Safety measures in U.S:** Roughly 12 million doses of Tamiflu being moved from federal stockpile for delivery to states.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1600 Clifton Rd. Atlanta, GA 30333, USA  
 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) TTY: (888) 232-6348, 24 Hours/Every Day - [cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov)  
[http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/general\\_info.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/general_info.htm)

#### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Swine Flu podcast**

Dr. Joe Bresee, released: 4/25/2009, run time: 5:46  
<http://www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=11226>

#### **Travel Advisories**

To monitor for travel advisories:  
<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentSwineFluUS.aspx>

It is also recommended that you prepare a food pack in case you become too ill to be able to resupply your normal home food supply.