

## What is swine flu?

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

## Is swine flu contagious?

Yes. Swine flu virus is extremely contagious and is spread mainly from person-to-person contact through coughing or sneezing. People may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick. The flu virus can live for up to two hours on surface areas so frequent hand washing is a good defense.

## What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu?

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. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions and is more dangerous to the very young, the elderly and those with compromised immune systems.

## Are there medicines to treat swine flu?

Yes, oseltamivir or zanamivir is most often used for the treatment and/or prevention of swine flu. These are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. These medicines are only used for severe cases or for those who are at increased risk for complications.

## How can I protect myself from getting sick?

Currently, there is no vaccine available to protect against swine flu. You can prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza by:

- **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 hands cleaners are also effective.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. Influenza is thought to **spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing** of infected people.
- If you do get sick, **stay home from work or school** and limit contact with others.

## What should I do if I get sick?

If you become ill with flu-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you must stay home and get plenty of rest and fluids until the symptoms pass. Just as in ordinary flu, there is no cause for alarm unless your symptoms worsen. If you are concerned you should contact your health care provider. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.

**You should call your doctor immediately if:**

- **Children:**

- 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:

- **Adults:**

- 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 further information?**

By telephone: Dial 311

On the web: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu>

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov>

