

FAQs

Swine influenza.

What do you need to know?



Health System

What is swine flu?

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

Is this swine flu virus contagious?

The Center for Disease Control (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.

What are the signs and 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 and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. *If you have these symptoms, please stay home to reduce exposure to others and recuperate by resting and drinking clear liquids. If your symptoms worsen, contact your health-care provider about treatment options*

How does swine flu spread?

Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

What should I do to keep from getting the flu?

First and most important: wash your hands. Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Try not to touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

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. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- * Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- * Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- * If you get sick with influenza, the CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

How long can viruses live outside the body?

We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks. Frequent handwashing will help you reduce the chance of getting contamination from these common surfaces.

How serious is swine flu infection?

Like seasonal flu, swine flu in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe. However, swine flu infection can be serious.

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.

Have further questions??? Call the Ohio Department of Health's Swine Flu Hotline toll-free at 1-866-800-1404. The Hotline is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm.