

Swine Influenza A (H1N1)

Information Sheet for General Public

What is Swine Influenza A (H1N1)?

Swine Influenza A (swine flu) is a respiratory disease caused by an Influenza Type A virus that normally infects pigs. While uncommon, swine flu occasionally infects people. Human swine flu infections are called Swine Influenza A (H1N1)v infections, where the “v” stands for variant.

What are the symptoms of Swine Influenza A (H1N1)v?

People that are infected with swine flu have similar symptoms to seasonal flu infection. Signs and symptoms of Swine Flu variant infection include:

- Fever
- Tiredness
- Lack of appetite
- Coughing
- Other less common symptoms include a runny nose, sore throat, eye irritation, vomiting, and diarrhea

How does Swine Influenza A (H1N1)v spread?

Swine flu can be transmitted between pigs and people anytime a person has contact with the respiratory droplets from an infected pig coughing or sneezing. Close contact to infected pigs may occur when visiting pig barns, working with pigs, or attending agricultural events. These droplets lead to human infections when they land in a person’s nose or mouth or are inhaled.

Who is at risk of getting Swine Influenza A (H1N1)v?

Swine flu normally circulates in pigs and human infections are uncommon. However, anyone who works with or spends time around sick pigs may be at risk of swine flu variant infection.

Can Swine Influenza A (H1N1)v be prevented?

Precautions can be taken to prevent contracting and spreading swine influenza:

- Don’t take personal items, food or drink into pig areas.
- Don’t eat, drink, or put anything in your mouth in pig areas.
- Avoid close contact with pigs that look or act ill.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub before and after exposure to pigs or their environment.
- To further reduce the risk of infection, minimize contact with pigs and wear personal protective equipment like protective clothing, gloves and well-fitted masks that cover your mouth and nose when contact is required.

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- If you own pigs, watch for symptoms. Call a veterinarian if you suspect illness. Avoid contact with pigs if you have flu symptoms.

Who should get vaccinated?

Although human flu vaccinations are effective for seasonal flu viruses, they will not protect against swine flu viruses. The CDC recommends that people who have contact with pigs get the seasonal flu vaccine to help prevent spreading human flu viruses to pigs.

What should you do if you become sick after being around pigs?

If you become ill after spending time around pigs contact your healthcare provider. Make sure to tell your healthcare provider about any exposure to pigs or if you attended an agriculture event. Your healthcare provider will ask you to test for influenza infection and prescribe antiviral medications that are used to treat the flu. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions when taking any medications. After being diagnosed with swine flu variant infection, stay home and away from people that you live with until you are fever free for 24 hours except to seek medical care or other necessities. Avoid contact with pigs for 7 days after you get sick or until you have been fever free for 24 hours without using fever reducing medication, whichever is longer. Your local health department will contact you to talk about your illness and make sure the people you live with or work with do not have a similar illness.

How is Swine Influenza A (H1N1)v treated?

Swine flu variant infections are treated with prescription antiviral medications including: oseltamivir, peramivir, zanamivir, and baloxavir. Antivirals should be taken as soon as possible and work best when given within two days after getting sick. When treated early, variant flu complications could be prevented. Antivirals may reduce the duration and severity of flu variant infections in people.

Can people catch Swine Influenza A (H1N1)v from eating pork?

No, you cannot get swine flu from eating properly handled and prepared pork (pig meat) or other products derived from pigs. More information on how to properly handle and prepare pork may be found at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/meat/fresh-pork-farm-table>

For more information about Swine flu visit Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/>